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SHAMIL.

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CAPTIVITY

OF

TWO RUSSIAN PRINCESSES

IN THE CAUCASUS:

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INCLUDING

A SEVEN MONTHS' RESIDENCE

IN

SHAMIL'S SERAGLIO.

COMMUNICATED BY THEMSELVES,

AND TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL RUSSIAN

BY H. SUTHERLAND EDWARDS.

WITH AN AUTHENTIC

PORTRAIT OF SHAMIL, A PLAN OF HIS HOUSE, AND A MAP OF HIS TERRITORY.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER, AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.
1857.

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PREFACE.

DURING the late war, Shamil, in answer to a direct application from the Sultan, confessed his inability to bring any large force into the field against the Russians; and it was probably in return for his unavailing protestations of goodwill, that Abdul-Medjid conferred upon the mountain-chief the high-sounding but meaningless title of Viceroy of Georgia. No one could have felt the irony of this more keenly than Shamil himself, who was aware that he might as well have been named Governor-General of Moscow. Nevertheless, some months before the emissaries of the Sultan arrived he appears to have been very willing to profit by the first opportunity to injure his constant foe; and soon after the commencement of hostilities with Turkey, when a considerable portion of the troops, forming the ordinary army of the Caucasus, had marched towards Kars, he descended, with a large

body of mountaineers, into the plains of Georgia, and carried off two Princesses, members of the Georgian royal family. These ladies, with their children and attendants, remained in captivity for upwards of eight months. They were then set at liberty, in consideration of an enormous ransom, and the return of Shamil's son, who, many years previously, had been given up to the Russians as a hostage, and who, at the period of the mountaineers' descent into Georgia, was serving as a cornet in one of the regiments of the Imperial Guard.

The Princess Anna Chavchavadzey and her sister the Princess Varvara Orbeliani, independently of their rank in Georgia, had occupied distinguished positions at the Russian court as ladies of honour to the Empress; so that no ordinary excitement was produced among the aristocracy of Russia by the news of their captivity. That they had been cruelly treated was too probable, but as a severe censorship was exercised over their letters by Shamil, through his interpreters, the Princesses had been obliged to confine all their communications to one subject, that of the ransom. Accordingly, when the captives were at length set at liberty, and it was known that they had lived many months in Shamil's own house, the interest felt in their adventures was unbounded.

To satisfy this very natural curiosity, the Princesses communicated every particular of the attack upon their château, their journey through the mountains, and their residence in Shamil's seraglio, to M. Verderevsky, (editor of the "Kavkas," or "Caucasus," the principal journal of Tiflis,) who, in the summer of 1856, published a full account of the highly dramatic events in which they had been such unwilling actors. But it is not for its dramatic interest alone that M. Verderevsky's book is worth reading. Its particular value consists in the light it throws upon the condition of the territory at the foot of the Caucasus, the degree of civilisation existing among the tribes governed by Shamil, and especially on the character and habits of Shamil himself. Nothing so complete, and above all, so authentic, has ever appeared on the subject of the Caucasian mountaineers and their mysterious leader; and in following the author through his interesting narrative, we shall meet with scenes, characters, and manners, all thoroughly new.

The present work is founded upon M. Verderevsky's narrative, which has been followed faithfully in every particular, though sometimes a sentence, or even a page, may be found in the original, which it has been thought advisable to condense in the translation. M. Verderev-

sky's opening chapters, for instance, which are devoted to the invasion of Kahetia, and to the effect produced in Tiflis by the news, are so long that in an unabridged translation they would probably have appeared tedious to English readers; here, in the English version, an endeavour has been made to tell the same story in fewer words. But by far the greater portion of the book has been translated, if not word for word, at all events phrase by phrase, and wherever dialogue occurs, the rendering is strictly literal. No fact has been omitted, and we need scarcely say that nothing whatever has been added, with the exception of a few foot-notes, which here and there appeared indispensable.

With regard to the most important male personage who figures in M. Verderevsky's narrative, it is surprising, when we consider how much has been written about Shamil, to find how little is known of him personally. His English and German biographers, while expressing in general terms their high admiration of his virtues, at the same time state that he, with his own hands, beat his mother to death; that he maintains his dignity with the Murids by deluding them into the belief that he carries on a regular correspondence with the Sultan of Turkey and the Pacha of Egypt; that he pretends to have periodical interviews with Allah, and that he is in

the habit of announcing that Mahomet has appeared to him in the form of a dove. The truth is, we have derived nearly all our information about Shamil, including even the ordinary orthography of his name, from the Germans, who, in their turn, have taken most of their facts from the Russians; with the exception of the accounts of his apocryphal victories, which are obtained for the most part from the Constantinople Journal. It is this coupling of Russian facts with German enthusiasm, that produces the strange contradictions in which all the English biographies of the Caucasian Chief abound, now representing him as a barbarous marauder and a religious impostor, and again as a patriot-hero, fighting only for the liberties of his country.

It will be observed, that the Princesses give Shamil a far higher character than his panegyrists in England, France, and Germany have ever ventured to claim for him. Yet these ladies had to thank Shamil for the destruction of their property, for a painful and prolonged captivity, and, in the case of the Princess Chavchavadzey, for the loss of a darling child.

There is another point to which we wish to call attention in favour of the truthfulness and good faith which distinguish M. Verderevsky's performance. Soon after the Princesses' return from captivity, a Prussian

gentleman, who was serving as an officer in the Russian army of the Caucasus, published a short account of the very incidents which the editor of the "Kavkas" was afterwards enabled to relate at length. Now, if the Russian author had been unduly prejudiced against Shamil and his mountaineers, he would not have taken the trouble to contradict several statements to their discredit, which the German writer had put forth; yet M. Verderevsky has done this most satisfactorily.

The author of *A Visit to Schamyl* * reminds us of those Germans M. Herzen speaks of, who insist on being more Russian than the Russians themselves. Thus, in his uncompromising hatred for the mountaineers, he makes the Princess Chavchavadzey say of them †, "They are not human beings, they are wild beasts. They have not one sentiment in common with us, and to speak to them is like speaking to a tree." "The Princesses," replies M. Verderevsky, "do not appear to have said anything of the kind. The mountaineers are human beings and have human sentiments, but they happen not to be civilised."

The Prussian author says that Shamil's people "held daggers over the Princesses' heads to force them to

* "Ein Besuch bei Schamyl. Brief eines Preussen." Berlin.

† We translate from the Russian version published in the "Kavkas."

write," that "frequently they wrote as many as fifteen letters before one would satisfy their *jailer*," and that they were "ordered to say they had everything they desired, and to praise the manner in which they were treated." "There is nothing," says M. Verderevsky, "about daggers, nor about fifteen letters, in the Princesses' narrative, nor was there any 'jailer' in the matter."

The Prussian author states that, during the journey through the mountains, "the Princess Chavchavadzey was obliged to climb up a tree, round which the mountaineers placed themselves on the ground, so as to keep her safe." The Princesses themselves knew nothing of this.

To mention less important errors by the same author, the German writer makes Shamil fifty-five, whereas in 1856 he was only fifty; and he calls Djemmal-Eddin, Shamil's eldest son, the heir, whereas his younger brother Kazi-Machmat was proclaimed in his stead, while Djemmal-Eddin was still in Russia.

With regard to the dates, it must be stated that the Russian style has been preserved throughout.

H. S. E.

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MAP OF SHAMIL'S TERRITORY & THE ADJACENT DISTRICTS,

INDICATING THE POSITION OF ALL THE LOCALITIES MENTIONED IN THE ACCOMPANYING WORK.

CAPTIVITY OF RUSSIAN PRINCESSES

IN

THE CAUCASUS.

CHAPTER I.

THE first news of the descent of the Lesghians into Kahetia was received in Tiflis on the 18th July, 1854. The intelligence caused the greatest astonishment; for the mountaineers had hitherto never dared to cross the Alazan. But all other feelings gave place to one of indignation and pity when it was heard that the Princess Chavchavadzey and the whole of her family, including her sister-in-law the Princess Orbeliani, had been carried off by the marauders. For some time no one knew the details of the affair, and therefore no one could come to any conclusion as to the proper measures for rescuing the captives. However, two officers in the Russian service, one a captain, the other a colonel in the imperial guard, and both moving in the highest society of Tiflis, offered, at the risk of their own liberty, to proceed at once to Shamil's residence in the mountains, and ascertain by what means the liberation of the Princesses

could be effected. General Read*, who commanded the army in the Caucasus, and was also governor of the Caucasian and Trans-Caucasian provinces, refused to sanction this project, which certainly was not calculated to lead to any favourable result.

The first thing necessary was to obtain positive information respecting the position of the Princesses; but in the meanwhile their father, the Prince of Georgia, had to be apprised of the misfortune which had befallen them, and accordingly the general lost no time in despatching the following letter to him at Moscow.

"It has pleased heaven to allow the mountaineers, in spite of all possible human foresight, to make a successful incursion into Kahetia; and your daughters and grandchildren have been the first victims of their marauding expedition.

"Such a calamity is overwhelming, as will also be the grief of your highness on receiving this information. I consider it my duty to express to you my sincere condolence for the great loss you have sustained; but, at the same time, I cannot but console myself with the hope that all chance of obtaining the liberation of your unhappy family from the hands of these brigands has not yet been lost. Providence, which has sent this affliction upon your family, and through them upon ourselves, will, at the same time, not forget to send us the means of alleviating their misfortunes." †

* This General afterwards lost his life in the Crimea.

† The news of the Princesses' captivity did not reach the Prince alive. He died four days before General Read's despatch arrived in Moscow.

Tiflis, we have said, was thrown into a state of profound agitation by the news of the calamity which had befallen the Princesses Chavchavadzey and Orbeliani; and yet Tiflis, being in the vicinity of perpetual warfare, is in the habit of receiving intelligence which is not only of the most sanguinary character, but which also concerns personally a large number of its inhabitants. What caused such universal dismay, when the captivity of the Princesses was made known, was the conviction that these helpless ladies and their children, of whom there were six, would be subjected to every kind of suffering and degradation. Every one knew that not only were the mountaineers of the Caucasus not Christians, but that they had on several occasions proved themselves incapable of the slightest compassion for the misfortunes of those who had fallen into their hands.

There were also reasons of a less universal character which caused the inhabitants of Tiflis to take a special interest in the fate of the captives. The Princesses were granddaughters of George XIII., the last sovereign of Georgia*; and the names of Orbeliani and Chavchavadzey were also known and beloved in connection with the history of the province. The sympathy which was felt throughout Tiflis for the fate of the two Princesses was increased, in the case of the Princess Orbeliani, by the knowledge that only six months previously she had

* George XIII., whose kingdom had been overrun during his lifetime alternately by the Turks and Persians, bequeathed it on his deathbed to the Emperor Paul. Georgia, which has been a Christian country since the fourth century, had long been the prey of the neighbouring Mahometan nations and tribes, who plundered it without mercy.

lost her husband and her eldest child. The former, a general in the Russian army, had been killed in an action with the Lesghians; the latter, a little boy, only a few months old, had died from illness about the same time; and the father and son were buried together.*

But the position of both sisters excited not only the commiseration of Tiflis and Georgia, but of all Russia,—a fact of which the writer holds in his possession abundant evidence, in the numerous letters sent from all parts of the empire to the office of the *Kavkas* newspaper (Tiflis), to inquire after the fate of the Princesses.

In the meanwhile Prince David Chavchavdzey had in a few days lost all his family, and nearly all his fortune. The Prince's magnificent estate of Tsenondahl, which is situated in Kahetia (a province which had always been regarded as the brightest gem in the crown of the Georgian kings), thanks to its sheltered position, the mildness of its climate, and the richness of its soil, boasts the finest fruit-gardens in all Georgia. The wines of Kahetia are celebrated, and the land is generally so fertile that the peasants who cultivate it are prosperous and even rich. Tsenondahl, the most beautiful estate in the province, is seven versts† from Telaff, and extends along the banks of a river which falls into the Alazan. The balcony of the *château* of Tsenondahl commands a beautiful view of the valley of

* It is a remarkable fact, that Prince Orbeliani was himself a prisoner of Shamil's for eight months in 1842. His father was for some time a prisoner with the Persians; and this fate would almost appear to be an hereditary misfortune in the family.

† Nearly five miles.

the Alazan with its rich gardens, and beyond it the snow-capped peaks of the Caucasus rising one above the other in a series of steps towards heaven. Tsenondahl was celebrated for its hospitality, and was well known to all the illustrious persons who had visited the Caucasus, while the picturesqueness and grandeur of its scenery have been celebrated by one of our national poets.

But Tsenondahl is like a beautiful estate at the foot of Vesuvius, being constantly exposed to the incursions of the marauders. The Kahetians are only separated by one range of heights from the Lesghians, their ancient and irreconcilable enemies, from whose secret and unexpected attacks they have suffered from time immemorial. In the present day the Kahetians are always, to a certain degree, prepared for these plundering expeditions, and never go about unarmed. But in spite of this the enemy sometimes make their appearance so unexpectedly, or in such force, that their success is certain. Even the regular army which forms the Lesghian cordon, as it is called, does not suffice. For a distance of 160 versts* the soldiers occupy the most advantageous posts from which to issue rapidly and check the ingress of marauders into Kahetia. But these posts are established at such distant intervals along the line, that many roads are left open, along which light bodies of mountaineers can easily pass. Accordingly it sometimes, though rarely, happens that the Lesghians traverse the cordon, in which case the soldiers endea-

* One hundred and seven miles.

vour to intercept their return, and make them pay for their exploit.

This was precisely what occurred in 1854.

The Princess Chavchavadzey only arrived at her estate about two weeks before the Lesghians made their descent. She had invited her sister, who was still suffering acutely from her two recent bereavements, to pass the summer with her at Tsenondahl; and the Princess Orbeliani accepting her invitation, brought with her her only surviving child, a little boy only six months old, in whom all the affection of the young widow and mother were now concentrated, and her niece the Princess Nina Baratoff, a beautiful girl of eighteen.

Here we may as well mention the names of all the inhabitants of Tsenondahl, every one of whom suffered more or less from the incursion of the Lesghians. They were as follows: —

First, the proprietor of the estate, Prince David Alexandrovitch Chavchavadzey, thirty-seven years of age, lieutenant-colonel in the army, and *aide-de-camp* to the general commanding the *corps d'armée* of the Caucasus;

His wife the Princess Anna Elinichna, Princess of Georgia in her own right, and formerly lady of honour to the Empress, twenty-eight years of age;

Prince David's sister Nina Alexandrovna Gribaiedovna* widow of our celebrated poet;

* The Russian family names have masculine and feminine terminations. This lady's husband was Gribaiedoff, the author of "*Gore ot Ouma*" (Grief from Wit), one of the best comedies in the Russian lan-

Prince David's aunt the Princess Tinia Orbeliani, widow of Prince George Orbeliani, and cousin to Prince David's father the late Prince Alexander Chavchavadzey, an old woman seventy-four years of age;

The children of Prince David and Anna Elinichna, — Salome, a little girl six years old, Marie five years old, Elena four years old, Tamara three years old, a little boy Alexander five years old, Lydia a baby of only four months.

The above were the ordinary inmates of Tsenondahl; but Nina Alexandra Gribaiedovna, and Elena, the Princess Chavchavadzey's third child, were absent on a visit to the Princess of Mingrelia. On the other hand, we have said that there were visitors at the *château*. These consisted of the Princess Orbeliani *, aged twenty-six, with her little boy and her niece the Princess Nina Baratoff already mentioned, and Madame Drancey the governess of the Princess Chavchavadzey's children. This lady had been only eighteen days in Tsenondahl, and had not left France more than six months.

Among the other visitors we must not forget to mention Ensign Gamgrelidzey, the Prince's steward, and his wife Daredjana; a retired captain named Achverdoff; a nurse ninety-seven years old, who had outlived three generations of the Chavchavadzeys; twelve female servants, and a little boy.

guage. In consideration of his high literary merit, he was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to the court of Persia, and at Teheran was assassinated by the populace. The details of this affair are given by Lady Sheil in her recent work on Persia.

* The Princess Orbeliani had also been appointed one of the Empress's ladies of honour.

CHAP. II.

PRINCE DAVID CHAVCHAVADZEY had lately arrived in Kahetia to take the command of the local militia. The soldiers were billeted in different villages; but in case of need, they had orders to assemble and place themselves under his command. During the month of June the militia quitted the right bank of the Alazan, on which Tsenondahl stood, and crossed over to the side next the mountains. Up to the end of the month there was no sign of danger, and the Prince continued to pass the greater part of his time on his own estates. But on the 30th he received a message from the officer commanding the left of the line of forts composing the Lesghian cordon, to the effect that Shamil had arrived with a detachment of 15,000 men at Karaty (an *aoul* or village at the top of the mountains, from which the enemy could direct themselves upon any point), and that it was necessary, by way of precaution, to assemble the militia and concentrate it at Hando, about two miles in advance of Shildy on the left bank of the Alazan.

On that very day Prince David Chavchavadzey's adjutant, Prince Roman Chavchavadzey was despatched to call out the militia; and the day follow-

ing, Prince Chavchavadzey himself set off for Hando, leaving his family in fancied security at his estate. No measures were taken for the protection of Tsenondahl, on the ground that since the year 1800, when Omar Khan of Avaria, at the head of 20,000 Lesghians, marched within fifty versts* of Tiflis before he was defeated, there had been no instance of the enemy crossing the Alazan. Almost every year the family at Tsenondahl saw flames on the left bank; but they had never any fears for their own personal safety, as they were aware that at the slightest sign of danger they could always obtain help. In their vicinity was a battalion of infantry of the line, and Telaff, the district town, was seven versts distant; so that in default of assistance, they could have no trouble in finding a safe asylum. These considerations, apparently well founded, prevented the family from entertaining any notion of danger.

On the 1st of July, Prince Chavchavadzey arrived at Hando, rode round the environs, established ambuscades, and then returned as far as Shildy. This village was composed of houses surrounded by gardens, and was defended by a small fortress, which was, however, old and unprovided with cannon.

On the 2nd of July, Prince Chavchavadzey, who was still at Shildy, had received no notice of the enemy's approach. In the afternoon he visited the camp of the militia, numbering 440 men, and remained there until late in evening. On his return to Shildy he paid a

* Thirty-three miles.

visit to Prince Ratieff, who commanded the fortress with a garrison of sixty men.

At midnight, while Prince Chavchavadzey and his host were at supper, they were interrupted by a militiaman, who had just arrived from the Pohali tower, the most advanced point of the Russian outposts in Kahetia. He announced that the tower was already surrounded, and that the mountaineers were making rapidly for Shildy.

On the receipt of this intelligence, Prince Chavchavadzey left Prince Ratieff with his garrison to defend the fortress, and himself hurried forward with fifteen militiamen to the village of Hando. Here all the people were in arms, a state of things which confirmed the news brought to Shildy from the Pohali tower.

Taking into consideration the defenceless state of Hando, the Prince was for some time undecided whether to await the enemy there or retreat to Shildy, where a more effectual resistance could be offered by a small body of men. To determine the point, it was necessary first to ascertain whether the invaders consisted of an ordinary detachment of Lesghians, or whether Shamil himself was at their head; in the latter case it would certainly be more prudent to retreat to Shildy. But the desired information was not received until half-past two in the morning, when some militiamen arrived from the Pohali tower with the news that the enemy's cavalry were advancing in two parties, of which one was following the course of the river Chalty, while the other was bearing more to the left. The word "cavalry" soon relieved the Prince of all indecision. He at once knew that Shamil himself must be in the village of

Pohali with all his forces; and in accordance with this conviction, he at once recalled his ambush-parties, and retreated to Shildy.

Here he issued orders to the commandant, Prince Goorguenidzey, to the effect that the inhabitants should place all their families and goods inside the fortress, and that he himself should join the militia. Unfortunately, through the carelessness of the inhabitants, the Prince's precautionary measures were not carried into execution.

At the same time Prince David sent a hundred and fifty militiamen to strengthen Prince Ratieff's garrison, while he distributed the remainder of his troops in the gardens along the road leading to the fortress, and inside some of the houses, in the proportion of about ten men to each house.

The defenders of Shildy remained all night in the positions assigned to them; but the expected attack was not made, and the only signs of the enemy's proximity consisted in signal-guns discharged at intervals from the Pohali tower. In this manner the time passed on until the next morning.

On the third of July, at seven o'clock, Shildy was attacked; and after a brisk fusilade had been kept up for some time in the houses, gardens, and along the road, the village burst into flames in several places at once. With the exception of an assault on the market-place, which was repulsed, the engagement, though it lasted until two in the afternoon, was of the most irregular character. However, at the foot of the hedges, walls, and embankments, there were ample proofs of the

victory gained by the defenders.* At two o'clock the mountaineers fell back from Shildy to Hando. When they retreated, Prince Chavchavadzey observed that a portion of them crossed the river Chalty, with the evident intention of attacking the villages of Sabooi and Shakriani. The Prince at once imparted his fears to the militia, and called for volunteers to undertake the defence of the threatened spots. Captain Prince Georgadzey at once stepped out of the line, and was instantly joined by a hundred and fifty militiamen. The proceedings of this small detachment were crowned with the most complete success. They pursued the enemy, and reached them just as they were about to set fire to the outskirts of one of the villages. Being attacked when they were in a state of complete disorder, the mountaineers took to flight, and did not renew their attempt.

At seven in the evening, Prince Chavchavadzey received support from the commander of the infantry of Georgia, Colonel Prince Kouboulоff, who arrived with two companies of the Mingrelian regiment, and one mountain gun; and at eight o'clock he was joined by

* According to the returns of the Governor of Telaff, the mountaineers left in Shildy, and on the banks of the Alazan, four hundred and eighty bodies; but it appeared from the intelligence gathered by Isaac Gramoff the interpreter, who afterwards visited Daghestan and Chechni, that the loss of the Lesghians in their invasion of Kahetia amounted to twelve hundred men. Every *Naib*, or governor of a province, presented to Shamil a separate report; but no one knew anything about their contents. In Daghestan, Chechni, and Avaria, there was not a village in which Gramoff was not stopped and interrogated as to whether such and such mountaineers had not been taken prisoners by the Russians. Gramoff could only give one answer, that there were no prisoners, but that a great number had been killed.

Lieut.-Col. Prince Toumanoff, with a battalion of the Tiflis regiment, and two mountain guns. The reinforcements were drawn up in the market-place, on the left side of the fortress.

At eleven o'clock at night, the enemy attacked the six companies, but was soon overpowered. Thus ended the sanguinary contest of July 3; but among the incidents of this day there were several which have not been mentioned, and which deserve especial attention on account of their intimate connexion with subsequent events.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, when the marauders, who had just been repulsed, were retreating towards Hando, Prince Chavchavadzey, who was still occupied in giving directions to the volunteers, wrote a hasty note in pencil to his family at Tsenondahl, saying that, although Shildy had been attacked, everything was now going on well, that the enemy had withdrawn to Hando, and consequently that there was *no occasion for uneasiness.* The latter words were underlined. This note only reached Tsenondahl by a miracle. The previous messengers had been cut to pieces on the road; but this one, strangely enough, arrived in safety at the *château.* It would have been better for the family at Tsenondahl if this communication had also been intercepted. The Prince, delighted at the success of the affair at Shildy, had hastened to reassure his wife as to his own position; but he had not reflected that his words were susceptible of a double meaning, and that they were calculated to lull all apprehensions on her part, before every possibility of danger to herself had disappeared. However this may have seemed at

the time, the Prince's hurried note had certainly a fatal effect in producing the calamity which ensued.*

In the next chapter, the reader will see what reference all the above incidents had to the affair at Tsenondahl; at present, not to break the thread of the narrative, we will continue the adventures of the brave defenders of Shildy.

On the 4th of July, at daybreak, the village was again attacked. After the fighting had continued several hours, one of the inhabitants came to the Prince with the information that an immense body of horsemen had descended from the mountains, some miles below Shildy, had reached the bottom of the hill of Kontzhi, and were marching in the direction of the Alazan, with the evident intention of crossing at the Toghniansky ford. Prince Chavchavadzey was confounded. As yet he knew nothing of their force, and he had no time to lose in forming conjectures. He summoned Prince Ratieff, and inquired whether he could answer for the safety of the fortress, and at the same time allow him to detach a portion of the troops for the purpose of pursuing the marauders who were marching towards the Alazan. Prince Ratieff answered

* Among other circumstances which led to this calamity, we may mention two in particular: first, that the commander of the district of Telaff, Prince Andronikoff, by attempting, without success, to pass the Alazan, showed the marauders how to ford it with safety, and thus, in all probability, emboldened them to cross the river to the side on which Tsenondahl and several unprotected villages were situated; and secondly, that the bearer of Prince Chavchavadzey's note, who crossed at a different ford, knew nothing of Prince Andronikoff's movements, and reported that the banks of the Alazan were tranquil.

with confidence, upon which Prince Chavchavadzey ordered Prince Toumanoff to form his four companies of infantry into marching order, and prepare for an attack. Unluckily there was no cavalry. When all was ready, Prince Chavchavadzey approached the soldiers; but at that very moment the militiaman who had been sent the day before to Tsenondahl returned with a note from the Princess Orbeliani, in the following words: —

"I cannot tell how far the reports are correct; but here every one is in a state of terror, and we are alone with the children and the servants. All our neighbours, the families of Prince Goulbat and Prince Roman, have gone into the woods; and your peasants, with their families, have also left the village. For God's sake, inform us as soon as possible, whether the danger is so great, and whether we need take refuge anywhere."

The Prince was naturally agitated, but he was still not without hope; for he could scarcely believe that there was no one to advise his family to fly to the wood, which was only fifty *sajens* (a hundred and fifty yards) from the house, and where they would all have been safe.* As for the house itself and the property it contained, he knew that there was little chance of saving either.

However, without saying a word about the contents of the letter, Prince Chavchavadzey ordered the four companies to march towards the Alazan; and himself led the column. He had scarcely had time to ride from the gardens of Shildy into the plain from which

* All who fled to the wood were saved.

all the right bank of the Alazan is visible, when one of the militiamen exclaimed —

"Look, Prince!"

The Prince turned round and saw five or six villages in flames, with Tsenondahl among the number.

He was already too late. The mountaineers had had time to cross to the right bank of the Alazan.

However, he ordered the infantry of the line to follow, while he and the militia went on before to the ford. But having reached the river, he found it so disturbed that to cross it with infantry was impossible. On the arrival of the troops of the line, all he could do was to order them to fire six volleys by way of announcing their presence to the inhabitants on the right bank. He little knew that it had long since been deserted. During the first few moments of forced inaction on the banks of the river which separated him from all those he held dear, and who were now, perhaps, suffering all the horrors of an attack from the marauders, the Prince, for the first time in his life suffered his feelings as a father and a husband to tempt him from his sense of duty as a soldier.

His sense of duty prompted him to seek the enemy and revenge the devastation which had been committed on a defenceless territory; but his feelings as a man urged him to follow and attack the particular detachment which had in all probability carried off his wife and children — though any attempt to rescue them might have caused their assassination.

The struggle was great, but fortunately it was not of long duration; the Prince's sense of duty as a soldier

ultimately prevailed. He made the sign of the cross, confided his family to God, retreated from the ford, and waited in ambush for the return of the marauders.

Prince David remained in ambush from twelve until five in the afternoon. During that period two or three parties of mountaineers were surprised and routed; but unfortunately—or, rather, fortunately—he saw nothing of those who had captured his family. The place of ambush had been well chosen, and was so situated that, before the marauders could be at all aware of its existence, it was already too late to escape.

The Prince was still ignorant of the position of the inhabitants of Tsenondahl; but the real truth soon became evident to him. After the destruction of the second party of cavalry who stumbled on the ambuscade, the militiamen, according to the ancient custom of Georgia, brought the heads of the marauders, and the booty found in their bags, to throw at the feet of their *seigneur* and commander. Glancing at the heap of plunder before him, the Prince recognised several objects belonging to the dining-room, bed-rooms, and nursery of the *château* of Tsenondahl. He could not utter a word, but, as if still incredulous about a fact which no longer admitted of a doubt, he turned silently to Oscar, his faithful servant, who had not deserted him for a moment.

Oscar at once understood him, and answered —

"You know yourself, Prince, where these things were taken."

It was evident that Tsenondahl had been plundered;

but the Prince still ventured to hope that, although the marauders had carried off whatever property had been left in the house, the helpless women had found some one to advise and protect them, and were at that moment in safety.

At five o'clock in the afternoon Prince Chavchavadzey received a message from Prince Ratieff, asking for reinforcements; and he was obliged to abandon the ambuscade, and go to his assistance. On his way to Shildy, the Prince inquired of the inhabitants which route the marauders were likely to take in returning to Pohali. He was informed that, in all probability, they would pass by the hills of Kontzhi, upon which he detached two companies from the force at his disposal, placed them, together with a couple of guns, under the command of Captain Hitrovo, and ordered that officer to occupy the hill named, until the main body of the marauders returned. He was to attack them as far as was possible by surprise, and endeavour to rescue any prisoners they might have in their possession. In issuing these directions, the Prince was undeniably performing his duty as an officer; but he was at the same time imperilling the lives of his family, who, if they happened to be in the hands of the mountaineers, were sure not to be abandoned alive.

Captain Hitrovo set off to the hill of Kontzhi; and the Prince returned to Shildy. As soon as the soldiers of the latter caught sight of the marauders, they set upon them with a shout of defiance, and caused them to retreat towards Hando. However, about fifteen Lesghians remained in a church, which they had entered

with a view to plunder.* Ensign Mamacheff was ordered to turn them out. He hurried forward, but was shot down on the threshold; and six militiamen who accompanied him were also killed. The Prince, seeing the impossibility of ejecting the mountaineers from their stronghold without considerable loss, ordered his men to surround the church with dry branches, and then set fire to them. The greater part of the mountaineers perished in the flames. Only four of them left the church; and these were instantly cut to pieces. Thus terminated the attack on Shildy.

At nine in the evening, Prince David received a note from Captain Hitrovo, informing him that the enemy, returning from Tsenondahl and the neighbouring villages with a considerable amount of booty and a large number of prisoners, had intended to pass by the foot of the hill of Kontzhi, but that he had received them with a volley, and had killed several of the mountaineers, besides retaking a few of the prisoners. He concluded by asking whether he was to remain in the same position. Fearing the Lesghians might return in the night and overwhelm Captain Hitrovo's small band, the Prince ordered him to return to Shildy.

The next day some militiamen were sent to the hill of Kontzhi to collect the bodies of the slain. Among the party were several of Prince David's serfs, who at once recognised the corpse of Lydia, his infant daughter.

* The holy pictures in the Russian churches have costly frames. They are frequently, too, adorned with jewels of high value; and the drapery of the Saviour, Virgin, and saints is always represented by plates of metal, which are sometimes of solid silver, or even gold.

She bore no trace of a wound; but a small blue spot was just visible on her left temple. Without communicating the dreadful discovery to the Prince, the serfs carried the body of the little child to Tsenondahl, and had it buried in the church of St. George. Among the number of the slain was Daredjana, the wife of Gamgrelidzey the steward of Prince Chavchavadzey's estate. Her shoulders were pierced with wounds; and she had received two pistol shots in the head. All this was for the present kept secret from the Prince; so that he remained in a state of suspense which was more painful even than the most bitter certainty. The Prince was advised to visit Tsenondahl without delay, and was most anxious to do so; but he did not feel justified in leaving his regiment until the morning of the 6th, when Colonel Koolmann arrived. But by that time he had lost all desire to go; for his adjutant, Prince Roman Chavchavadzey, had informed him of the true state of affairs.

On the 8th of June, Prince Chavchavadzey had an interview with the commander of the party composing the Lesghian cordon, who had just arrived with a company of soldiers at Kvarel. The prince gave the commander an account of what had occurred, and on the 10th set off on his way to Tiflis. In Telaff he was met by his sister's husband, Actual Counsellor of State*,

* This *tchinn* or rank corresponds to that of general in the military service. The Marquis de Custine and his followers have expressed their surprise that in Russia men who have never served in the army should be made colonels and generals. Such is not the case. An actual counsellor of state ranks with a general, a counsellor of state with a

Baron A. P. Nicolai, and the Deputy Governor of Tiflis Colonel Kolubakin, who, three days previously, had invited the Prince either to visit him at Telaff, or to send word where he was to be found on the other side of the Alazan. From Telaff the Prince set off in company with Baron Nicolai for Tiflis.

We must here say a few words about two persons who exhibited great courage and devotion during the event we have just narrated, namely, Prince Goulbat Chavchavadzey, and Ensign Gamgrelidzey, a nobleman of Imeritia, who held the office of steward to the Chavchavadzey estates, and whose wife fell by the hands of the mountaineers in the affair at the hill of Kontzhi. The former, several days before the departure of Prince David from Tsenondahl, had set off for the village of Moukouzanni, on the right bank of the Alazan, on the road from Telaff to Signakh; the latter had been to some other village on business connected with the estates. On the 3rd of July, from two opposite points, they were both observers of the conflagration at Shildy; and each started, with only five or six volunteers and an almost certain prospect of death, to assist the Prince. The defenders of Shildy saw Gamgrelidzey fall in with the enemy, from whom he nevertheless escaped and then galloped on towards Shildy. Having reached the gates, his first thought was for the safety of the Prince. He removed his hat, and made the sign of the cross three

colonel, and so on, just as, in our service, a captain in the navy ranks with a colonel in the army. The Marquis de Custine, if he had written about England, would have said that the lieutenant of a ship was sometimes promoted to the command of a regiment.

times, as he discovered him in the midst of his militia. Prince Goulbat arrived in Shildy an hour later.

The two officers remained with Prince Chavchavadzey during the whole day, and on the following morning accompanied him on his march towards the Alazan. Here, when it was found impossible to ford the river with infantry, they crossed, in spite of the Prince's entreaties, with fifteen horsemen, who volunteered for that purpose. Having reached the right bank, they hastened towards Tsenondahl, which was now in flames. Fortunately for them, they arrived too late; the place was plundered and deserted. They found the *château* burning like a candle, with no one near it but a Georgian nurse a hundred years of age, who had held four generations of the Chavchavadzeys on her knees.* The old woman was sitting half naked, with her hair dishevelled, by the side of the ruins. She remembered the building of the house, as one of the earliest events of her childhood, and was now sobbing and yelling forth one of those funeral chants which the Georgians are in the habit of improvising at their interments.

"David, David," she was exclaiming, "why are you not here to help your family?" She at the same time related how the mansion of Tsenondahl, which was now in flames, had grown up before her eyes.

* Marina Gaideli (that is to say, "Marina the nurse") went to Russia with Prince David's grandfather, Prince Gersevan, who was sent by Iracli, King of Georgia, as ambassador to the Empress Catherine II. She had nursed Prince Gersevan himself. During his embassy she nursed his son. She was afterwards Prince David's nurse, and finally superintended the nursery for Prince David's children.

CHAP. III.

In the meantime the occurrences at Tsenondahl were as follows. Prince David had just left his estate, on the 3rd of July, when the inhabitants of the *château* saw the reflection of a fire on the other side of the Alazan.* The sight was picturesque, but inspired no feeling of danger.† Nevertheless the Princess Chavchavadzey did not neglect to take certain precautions.

On that very day she directed the *Natsvala* ‡, or chief of the peasants, to take the necessary measures for the protection of the village and the *château*. The latter, in particular, might have been defended by a very small number of men, as it was surrounded by a high stone wall, which would have been an insurmountable barrier to the Lesghians.

Either from neglect or timidity, and principally, no doubt, because the majority of the able-bodied men had joined the militia, not one of the directions issued by the Princess was obeyed.

* The Alazan flows at a distance of ten versts (about seven miles) from Tsenondahl.

† To adopt the expression of Madame Drancey, "*C'était pittoresque et ne nous paraissait nullement menaçant.*"

‡ The Georgian *Natsvala* performs the same functions as the Russian *Starosta*; that is to say, he overlooks the peasants, and acts as intermediary between them and the owner of the estate.

Among the peasants many exhibited the greatest devotion; thus, for instance, the second *Natsvala* and another peasant went to the *château* on the day of the third, with an *arba*, and begged the Princesses to accompany them to the wood.*

"It is our duty to protect you," they said. "The danger is great; but we can make a place of safety for you behind the *arbas*, and will defend you to the last."

The advice of the peasant was without avail. The old Princess Tinia Orbeliani was, above all, incredulous of danger, and could not be prevailed upon to retire to the woods. As for the Princess Chavchavadzey, though she was aware of a certain amount of danger, she could scarcely believe that it was imminent, when none of her relatives or neighbours had warned her of it, or proposed measures for a general flight. In the same village lived the families of Prince Goulbat and Prince Roman Chavchavadzey; but they had gone away some days before, and Prince Roman's wife, before starting, had sent one of her servants to say that some young men, who had just arrived from Telaff, had recommended them to leave for that town without delay. The Princess Chavchavadzey sent to invite these young men to her house, wishing to converse with them personally respecting the anticipated danger; but she received no answer to her invitation. During this time the family, with the exception of the Princess, were at church, returning thanks for the repulse of the Lesghians, as

* The son of one of these peasants, a boy of thirteen, could not be persuaded to leave the house, saying that, "if his little prince perished, he would perish with him."

reported by the priest himself, who had just returned from Telaff. In the afternoon a messenger, sent by the Princess to the Alazan, returned with the news that a portion of the Lesghians had already crossed to the Tsenondahl side of the river, but had halted on the bank, being kept in check by a strong body of militia under Prince Andronikoff. This was the last moment for escape; but no one profited by it.

The messenger was not believed. The Princess Tinia and Daredjana Gamgrelidzey declared that "fear had made his eyes great;"* and the former of these ladies went so far as to caution those around her against saying a word to the Princess Chavchavadzey on the subject of danger. The Princess Anna was, in fact, so much occupied with her little Lydia, whom she was nursing, that she had no time for entering into the details of the situation, and therefore willingly left to others the task of directing the household.

An hour or two afterwards, a stranger arrived at the house and begged for hospitality. He was wet through, and stated that he had just escaped the Lesghians by swimming across the Alazan. He represented himself to be a merchant, and only asked permission to pass the night in the *château*. The servants would not grant his request without obtaining the consent of the Princess, who, however, readily granted it. A short time afterwards the pretended merchant was seen to load his gun. This at once raised the Princess's suspicion; and she lost no time in supplying firearms and ammunition to three men servants who still remained in the house. She at

* "The eyes of fear are great."—*Russian Proverb.*

the same time ordered them to watch the stranger, not to leave him for a moment alone, and at the first sign of treachery to kill him. While these directions were being given, the messenger sent by Prince David from Shildy, with the letter of which we have already spoken, arrived at Tsenondahl. This communication not only satisfied the family as to the position of the Prince, but also reassured them as to their own safety. After reading the note, one of them observed that it was a good thing they had not retired to the wood, and that they would now have time to get to Telaff. Every one concurred in this opinion. But as there was still no reason why they should not consult the Prince, the Princess Orbeliani sent him a note, inquiring how great the danger really was, and where they had better go in order to be thoroughly safe. This was the letter which Prince David had no time to answer.

Expecting every hour to hear from him, the Princesses still remained at Tsenondahl. In the evening, having received no reply, they sent to Telaff for post-horses, and were informed that they could not have them before the morning. The prospect of this delay did not disturb them in the least, as they had the greatest confidence in the proximity of the wood, where it appeared easy enough to obtain refuge at the very shortest notice. This wood was indeed so thick that the peasants who visited it in search of mushrooms never came back without having their clothes torn. However, it was necessary to take some precautions for the night. The Princess Chavchavadzey summoned the three men who had been entrusted with the *surveillance* of the suspicious mer-

chant. One of them was ordered to keep watch from the hay loft near the gates. The second was told to disarm the man, and even then not to lose sight of him. The third was sent to the belvidere, where the sound of horses' hoofs could be heard from as far as the other side of the Alazan, and where the whole family were afterwards discovered by the mountaineers.

Soon afterwards the Princesses, the children, and all the female servants retired to rest. The Princess went to bed after all the others, and, disturbed by dismal presentiments, was a long time falling asleep. She had, however, visited her three watchmen, and had found each at his appointed post; so that, knowing the marauders usually made their attacks during the night, she felt at her ease when morning approached, thinking that with the darkness all immediate danger had disappeared. But at daybreak the report of a gun rang through the courtyard. This was the signal of the pretended merchant, who, in spite of the Princess's directions, had not been disarmed. For the second time the orders of the Princess had been neglected; and this inattention was the cause of the catastrophe in which the whole family were involved.

The signal of the mountaineers' spy probably announced to them that Tsenondahl was unprotected, and that they could attack it with impunity. The report of the gun awakened the entire household, with one exception. In a moment they were all on their legs; but the "merchant" could not be found, and the men who had been put to watch had also disappeared. The Princess alone had not been roused. Fatigued by her vigil and

her excitement, she was still sleeping; and the servants, in their confusion, seem for some time to have lost sight of the necessity of waking her, although it was now tolerably certain that the marauders were approaching.

In front of the *château* stood a dense cluster of trees, in which the mountaineers had taken shelter for the night. After leaving their hiding-place they could still advance unperceived towards Tsenondahl, and could not be seen from the windows until they were within five minutes' march of the house.

In the meantime the Princess had been awakened, and was giving directions for the departure of the family. It was already seven o'clock; and a few minutes afterwards Dr. Gorlichenko (surgeon of the district, and the Princess's private physician) arrived from Telaff with the promised post-horses. The horses were instantly harnessed to Princess Chavchavadzey's travelling carriage, the bags of which were filled with jewellery, money, plate, and other valuables. The Princess was standing on the balcony hurrying on the servants, who were helping to pack the bags and boxes. It was now eight o'clock, when suddenly an old retired captain who lived at Tsenondahl was heard to exclaim, "*Modian*" (they come)! an announcement which threw the family into such consternation that from that moment they appear to have done nothing.

The men who had arrived with the horses took to their heels.

Dr. Gorlichenko met the marauders at the door of the house, checked them for a moment by firing his

pistols among them and killing the leader, and then profited by the confusion to escape.

The old captain who had given notice of the marauders' approach was an invalid and, moreover, unarmed. He ran to the end of the garden, and climbed up one of the trees which grew over the river Choongoora. The branch on which the old man was seated bent with his weight to such an extent that he seemed on the point of being precipitated into the water, but he contrived to remain in his insecure position until all danger had passed.

The Princess, in the meanwhile, directed the whole of the family to proceed upstairs to the belvidere. As soon as they had reached the top of the house, a peasant, whom no one knew, made his appearance with a saw. He proposed to saw down the staircase, and declared that he would protect the Princesses until the last. The Princess Chavchavadzey, fearing that the robbers, if they found the staircase destroyed, would set the house on fire, desired the man to desist from his intention, which he had already begun to execute. Reflecting, moreover, that one man could do nothing against the numbers who were about to invade the house, she desired the peasant to seek safety without delay, and to take with him the boy of thirteen, who even now was unwilling to forsake the family. The peasant took charge of the boy, and they at last disappeared.

The women and children were now alone on the belvidere. With the exception of the Princess Chavchavadzey and her sister, the whole party were in a state of the greatest trepidation. The former of these two ladies,

who alone preserved their presence of mind, turned to Madame Drancey, the French governess, and said, "*Quelle fatale destinée vous réunit à nous en ce moment! Pardonnez-moi d'en avoir été plus ou moins la cause!*" At the same time the Princess had to pacify the children, whose cries were sure to attract the notice of the robbers. She succeeded in silencing them all, with the exception of Lydia, the baby, whom she at last quieted by giving her the breast.

The Princess Orbeliani was also self-possessed. The only thing she feared was to witness the death of another person; and she accordingly placed herself next the door, to die the first.

By her side was the beautiful Nina Baratoff, in her rich Georgian costume.

The Princess Anna, who was on her knees pressing her little child to her bosom, had turned her back to the door, so that she might not see the blow which was to kill them both.

The remainder of the party were huddled together in one group.

In the above position the family remained as quietly as possible for about an hour, during which time the robbers were fully occupied searching the twenty-two rooms which composed the lower floors of the house. With sickness of heart the Princesses heard, from time to time, the opening and shutting of doors, the unlocking and breaking of boxes, the smashing of glass, and the thumping of the robbers' fists on the keys of the pianoforte whenever it attracted the attention of a fresh party.

The robbers appeared so thoroughly absorbed in their work of plunder, that the Princesses became courageous, and began to conceive projects of escape. The Princess Orbeliani opened the door, went down stairs, and succeeded in reaching the first floor, intending, if it should appear possible, to let down some of the elder children, such as Salome and Marie, through the window, after which it would be easy for them to run on to the wood. She, however, became convinced that her plan could not be carried out. In the lower rooms a number of mountaineers were engaged ransacking the Prince's cabinet. The Princess took a hasty glance at them from the top of the staircase, and returned to the belvidere.

Soon afterwards the old Princess Tinia Orbeliani went down stairs, and did not return. The Princess Tinia has but little memory, and has never given any intelligible account of her proceedings. It is certain, however, that having met the robbers, she concealed herself in a cupboard, and thus escaped a captivity which would probably have been fatal to her.

One of the servants suddenly conceived the idea of bolting the robbers out. She fastened the door of the belvidere,—an operation which could only prolong the suspense from which they had already suffered so much, for, of course, the door would soon yield to blows.

The Princess Chavchavadzey was on her knees, praying and listening, when, at last, the robbers arrived.

Three or four of them ran up the staircase with a light quick step, and, entering the room adjoining the belvidere, began to throw out of the window the pillows and bed-clothes, which were kept there in readiness for

visitors. Having done this, the robbers appeared to be on the point of retiring. They went part of the way down stairs; and the Princesses now began to hope that they would omit to visit the belvidere. But they hoped in vain. The mountaineers returned; and this time there were not merely three or four, but a large party. They reached the end of the staircase and shook the door, but not violently, nor even decidedly; so that it still remained closed: they probably expected to find the belvidere defended by an armed force.

At last, more decisive measures were adopted, and the door burst open. The robbers paused on the threshold and broke into a loud laugh, which can only be explained by their amusement at meeting with a group of defenceless women, when they had anticipated nothing less than an attack from a formidable body of men. To this wild and ironical shout, the children answered by a scream.

The Princess Anna now stood up, prepared to meet death face to face.

The Princess Orbeliani, who it will be remembered was next the door, was instantly seized upon, and then led down stairs with a certain amount of attention. The others were also laid hold of by the mountaineers, who rushed, each with his captive, towards the staircase.

The staircase, already weakened by the peasant's saw, gave way beneath the steps of the mountaineers, as they crowded down it with their prisoners. The whole party—mountaineers, women, and children—were mingled in a heap on the floor beneath; and many were the injuries received by the weaker portion of those who

fell. The Princess Chavchavadzey, who had let her child slip from her arms, saw one of the mountaineers tread upon it with his heavy foot.

As soon as they had recovered from the fall, the marauders proceeded to take possession of their prisoners, whom for a time they had necessarily relinquished. They made them descend the next staircase in a different manner. This time the robbers neither pulled nor carried, but rolled them down stairs. Having reached the next floor, comparatively without injury, the Princesses heard the word "Khancha"* uttered several times by the robbers. Immediately afterwards their long *shashkas* were flashing above the head of the Princess Chavchavadzey, whom they recognised as the head of the house; and, after being made the object of a severe contest between the different members of the band, the unfortunate lady fell into the power of the man who had first taken possession of her in the belvidere.

Here the captives were divided into several parties, each of which met with a separate series of adventures on their road to Shamil's camp.

* Wife of the khan or chief.

CHAP. IV.

We have said that the Princess Orbeliani, standing at the door of the belvidere, was the first to be seized upon by the robbers. We will begin by describing her adventures, and afterwards relate what befell the more important of the other victims.

The marauders consisted of Chechnians and Lesghians. One of the former had approached the Princess Orbeliani, and endeavoured to put his arms round her waist. The Princess instinctively withdrew from his embrace, upon which the Chechnian, in a mixture of Russian and Georgian, informed her that she had nothing to fear from him. The Princess on her part contrived to explain to him that she wished to have her child with her. The Chechnian gave her to understand that that was impossible, and taking her by the hand led her down the staircase.

When they arrived at the second staircase, the Chechnian took his captive in his arms, and carried her down, crossed the courtyard, and deposited her on a seat by the side of a well. Here he left the Princess for a time, but before doing so cautioned her against attempting to escape, and advised her to conceal herself as much as possible from his companions, in order to avoid being ill treated by them.

The Chechnian's warning simply meant that he did not wish to lose his treasure, which would certainly some day or other procure him a handsome sum of money by way of ransom, and that he was at the same time anxious to continue his burglarious researches in the *château* of Tsenondahl.

However the value which the Chechnian evidently set upon her encouraged the Princess to demand her son, and the mountaineer went away promising to bring him to her.

After some time the Chechnian did indeed return with a child, but it was Lydia, the Princess Chavchavadzey's little girl. The infant was wrapped up in a quilt*, edged with lace, which the mountaineers appeared to think very valuable, for they lost no time in tearing it off as soon as they perceived it. The Princess held the child in her arms until another mountaineer came for it, saying that its mother had sent him to fetch it.

The Princess Orbeliani's captor did not return for a considerable time, during which she was a constant witness of the robbers' brutality.

From her position behind the well she saw them drag forth Madame Drancey, the children, and one of the nurses, place them on horseback, and conduct them outside the courtyard. She saw them pillage the house, and afterwards set it on fire. Of her sister's movements, however, she knew nothing. Probably the Princess

* In Russia infants are carried about in wadded quilts, and when very young have scarcely any other covering.

Chavchavadzey, who had been taken out on foot, had passed unobserved in the midst of a party of horsemen.

When nearly every one had gone away, the Chechnian who had taken possession of the Princess Chavchavadzey returned with four of his companions, and proposed that she should get on horseback.

The horse was magnificent, and the saddle equally good, only it was the saddle of a mountaineer, and therefore not very well suited to a lady. Otherwise there had been nothing hitherto in the treatment of the Princess Orbeliani which, considering the circumstances, could be made a subject of complaint. The black cloth dress which the young widow was wearing had not been injured, and she had been subjected to no kind of personal insult.

They proceeded slowly, but without accident, as far as the Kizishevi, the first river they had to cross. Here the mountaineers found time to inform the Princess Orbeliani that they knew who she was, and that they remembered her husband when he was in captivity with Shamil. They added that he was a brave man, and therefore entitled to their respect.

Until the passage of the Kizishevi they proceeded in a straggling manner; and as the Princess was riding behind them all, she knew nothing about the position of the other captives. But, as she was descending towards the river, she perceived the pink dress of her son's wet nurse, which somewhat comforted her, as she felt sure that the nurse could not be far from the little boy.

Having reached the other bank, the mountaineers

and their prisoners continued to advance without any particular order, until they approached Captain Hitrovo's ambuscade at the back of the hill of Kontzhi. At this unexpected *rencontre* they formed into a mass with the prisoners in the centre, so that, while making their escape, they at the same time incurred no risk of losing their captives.

But before describing this scene we must relate the adventures of the other prisoners, from the time of their falling into the hands of the marauders until six in the afternoon, or probably later; for it was already five o'clock when Prince Chavchavadzey despatched Captain Hitrovo with his two companies to the hill of Kontzhi.

While the robbers were taking the Princess Orbeliani down stairs, and after her the Princess Chavchavadzey, Madame Drancey remained on her knees, covering her face with her hands, seeing nothing, and hearing only the screams of the children. Soon afterwards she felt herself in the arms of a man * with a bare shaven head, a red face, and an indescribable odour. This mountaineer, whom the French lady calls a monster, carried her part of the way down the staircase, which fell beneath his steps.

In this catastrophe all the women suffered considerably — as much from fright as from positive injuries—

* Madame Drancey communicated her own account of these incidents in French: "Je me sens prendre," she says, "par un homme à la tête nue et rasée, à la figure rouge, sentant je ne sais pas quoi. . . . Je me sens portée par ce monstre," &c.

and, with the exception of the Princesses Orbeliani and Baratoff, all had their dresses more or less torn.

Madame Drancey, in the latter respect, was more to be pitied than any one; for the robbers, in their anxiety to take everything valuable she possessed, tore her clothes from her back, and left her with nothing but "her chemise, her stays, and her Parisian boots."* In this condition she was carried into the courtyard, made to sit down on the steps of the laundry, and told to take care of a couple of horses, whose reins were placed in her hands. Madame Drancey had always been afraid of horses, but she understood that she had no choice but to obey.

Just then some person wearing a *chalma*, probably a Murid †, dismissed the mountaineers who had brought Madame Drancey down from the belvidere, and put some of his own men to guard her.

Remaining on the steps of the laundry, Madame Drancey was unable to see what was happening to her companions in misfortune. But she had now had time to collect her thoughts, and despair soon disappeared before hope in the breast of the French lady.

This is sufficiently proved by the determination at which she had already arrived, and which she afterwards communicated in the following words: — "I thought of my old mother, and of my little boy only ten

* "Ne me laissant rien excepté ma chemise, mon corset, et mes bottines de Paris."

† The Murids form the bodyguard of Shamil, and the *chalma* is their distinctive head-dress; it is wound like a turban round the top of the Circassian cap.

years of age, and made up my mind to employ three years, the utmost that could be necessary, in teaching one of these monsters the French language, so that he might understand me, and help me to escape and return to my dear native land."

In an hour or two the same Murid returned to the French lady, who was already so full of hope, and ordered her to get on horseback behind one of his men, and join the rest of the party, who had already set off.

The man who was riding in the saddle recommended her to lay tight hold of his girdle, which she naturally did not hesitate to do.

In this manner they reached the ford of the river Kizishevi. The scanty clothing of Madame Drancey became wet through in the passage, but one of the mountaineers observed her distressing situation, and covered her with his *bourka.**

Soon afterwards the benevolent mountaineer who had offered the French lady his garment presented her with a handful of flour, which he took from his pocket; but Madame de Drancey refused this primitive and disgusting refreshment.

The rest of her journey to Shamil's camp was performed in the midst of a herd of oxen, who constantly pressed up against her horse, and impeded its progress.

This mode of travelling was both inconvenient and dangerous; but it was necessary to bear every annoyance with patience. Moreover there was one decided ad-

* A kind of cloak.

vantage which fell to the lot of Madame Drancey, namely, that of escaping Captain Hitrovo's ambuscade. The herd which surrounded her appear to have been conducted by a different route from that pursued by the main body of the mountaineers; for Madame Drancey did not remember any collision with the Russians in the course of her journey, and such an affair as Captain Hitrovo's surprise could scarcely have failed to make an impression on her memory.

The mountaineers were frequently alarmed by the notion that they were being pursued, and on these occasions they would set off at full gallop.

Let us now return to the belvidere, and see what happened to the Princesses Baratoff and Chavchavadzey.

The Princess Nina Baratoff was sitting by the side of her aunt the Princess Orbeliani; and when the latter was led down stairs the former was taken possession of by some very young mountaineer, who appeared to be not more than sixteen or seventeen years of age. The youthful marauder, to judge by the elegance of his costume and the beauty of his arms, must have belonged to one of the best families of Chechni, which is known to be the head quarters of the Caucasian aristocracy. But, unwilling to rely on his own personal strength, particularly as the Princess Nina was full of health and vigour, the beardless young Chechnian commenced by tying his captive's arms behind her back. Then, convinced that it was impossible for her to escape, he led her down the staircase.

In the courtyard the gallant Chechnian, now secure of

his prize, placed her on a separate horse, and was polite enough to leave her Georgian costume untouched, being more impressed, as it would seem, by its magnificence than tempted by its value. The mountaineers who accompanied the young Chechnian aristocrat did not venture to interfere with his captive, who was thus the most fortunate of all the late inmates of Tsenondahl.

At the passage of the Alazan the Princess fell from her horse into the water, but was pulled out by the rope which held her elbows together. On the other side of the river a Naib * interfered, and had this rope removed.

The same Naib, at the request of the Princess Orbeliani, directed that the young Princess Nina should always be surrounded by some others of the prisoners from Georgia, and this order was obeyed throughout the journey, until they reached the tower of Pohali, though the young Chechnian still remained by her side.

In this manner the Princess Nina reached the hill of Kontzhi.

But here we must for the last time go back to the belvidere, in order to narrate the adventures of the Princess Chavchavadzey, who from the very beginning had a greater amount of misfortune to support than any of the others.

We left the Princess Chavchavadzey just after the mountaineers had engaged in an animated contest for the possession of the "Khancha," as they called her.

* Governor of a province subject to Shamil.

She had fallen into the hands of her original captor, who was apparently a Murid, his *chalma* being precisely similar to the one worn by the mountaineer who had taken charge of the Princess Orbeliani.

The first result of the contest between the robbers was felt by the Princess in the loss of all her clothes. Her muslin dress was torn from her in shreds, and her under garments soon met with a similar fate. At last the Princess, like the unfortunate Madame Drancey, had nothing left but her stays and her chemise.

Fortunately however, she had a natural covering in her long, thick, and beautiful hair *, which escaping from the comb fell over her neck and shoulders like a black mantilla.

The Princess had also the misfortune to lose one of her slippers during the disturbance, and this loss, though apparently trifling, was a fertile source of suffering during the first part of the journey.

The Murid who had finally taken possession of the "Khancha" placed her in a wardrobe which had been thoroughly plundered and battered to pieces. Leaving her there he went away to continue his search for booty in another part of the house.

At the bottom of the wardrobe was a large nail. The Princess in her trouble and confusion stepped on this nail with her naked foot, which was cut in a terrible manner.

* The effect of the terrible anxiety suffered by the Princess Chavchavadzey during her eight months' captivity was shown in the loss of nearly all this beautiful hair, which at the period of her return had become lamentably thin.

After a short absence the Murid returned, took the Princess into the courtyard, placed her on the ground and surrounded her with horses, so that she might be guarded from the envious glances of his disappointed rivals.

The Murid was now himself tempted by the Princess's diamond ear-rings, which he endeavoured to seize. She eluded his grasp, raised her hands to her head, and made him understand that she would give them up of her own accord if he would bring her her child.

The Murid instantly set off and soon returned with little Lydia, whom he had found in the arms of the Princess Orbeliani.

The infant had nothing on except its chemise; but the mother was delighted to obtain possession of it, and surrendered the ear-rings with pleasure.

After some time a party of mountaineers approached the Princess with an interpreter, and asked her "whether there were any treasures concealed about the house?"

"There is nothing hidden," replied the Princess: "search for what you want, there is no one to take it from you."

"Where is your husband?" asked the Chechnians.

"He is a soldier and at his post," was the answer.

"But where is he stationed?"

"I do not know that myself."

The Princess gave the latter answer in order to afford the mountaineers no opportunity of informing her that her husband was killed. Such news would have been

too much for her to support, although she was at the same time aware that, coming from such a source, it would not be very trustworthy.

The Princess now requested that her four other children might be brought to her. The mountaineers did not believe that such a young woman could have had five children.* However, after some delay they brought them all to her with the exception of Salome, the eldest, whom they were unable to find.

The mountaineers having been made to understand that the Princess wished to drink, brought her some water in a box of cocoa-nut wood which had always stood on the table in the drawing-room. As the Princess raised this strange goblet to her lips, the mountaineers for the first time perceived the rings on her fingers, and lost no time in pulling them off. The Murid did not witness this private act of plunder committed by his companions, or he would probably, from personal reasons, have objected to it.

Soon afterwards all the children were taken away, with the exception of Lydia, the baby. The mother was at the same time consoled by being informed that they would be taken care of and conducted with the rest of the prisoners to Shamil's camp.

The mountaineers now began to prepare for their departure. The Murid proposed that the Princess should ride on horseback; but she refused to do so, as she would then have been unable to hold her child in

* In the mountains of the Caucasus the women suffer a great deal from the amount of physical labour they have to perform; and no woman who had had five children could fail to look old.

her arms, and she could not consent to trust it for a moment in the hands of the Chechnians. Accordingly she determined to walk.

To walk was, however, no easy matter. The sand and small stones penetrated her stocking, and, entering the wound in her foot, soon caused her the most insupportable pain. The Princess could not keep up with the mountaineers, and was occasionally urged on by blows from their whips, which, though not inflicted with much force, were not the less painful and humiliating. She proceeded in this way until they reached the Kizishevi, which she commenced fording on foot with her child in her arms. The men on horseback were pressing against her on all sides.

At length when she was immersed up to her neck in the stream, she lost her footing, and the current was carrying her away, when one of the Chechnians took the child from the mother's arms, while another seized the Princess herself, lifted her on to his horse, and bore her in safety to the opposite bank. The principal result of this accident to the Princess was a violent fright; but her scanty clothing was at the same time so thoroughly saturated that it clung to her body. The Murid observing the helpless condition of his prisoner, who was sitting on the bank wet through and half dead from fright, took her behind him on his horse, and perceiving that she was unable to hold on to his girdle herself, passed her hands through it, and tightened it so that she was unable to withdraw them. The Murid now held the child himself.

In an hour's time the marauders arrived with their

captives at the village of Kandolee, and set fire to it as they passed. Now for the first time the Princess saw some of her servants, and one of them, a Russian girl named Vassilissa, came towards her with her son Alexander, who was only a year and four months old, and informed her that he had lost his wet nurse. The Murid, who understood what it was all about, took from his pocket a piece of sugar (which he had doubtless found at Tsenondahl), and gave it to the Princess for her little boy.

A man wearing a uniform which consisted of a dark blue *chouha**, and a red cap with a white *chalma* round it, now approached the Princess, and said to her, in good Russian,

"Who are you? Is it your house that was burnt in Tsenondahl?"

The Princess stated who she was, and that Tsenondahl was her estate.

"In that case," continued the unknown, "you need be under no alarm. Shamil has ordered that none of the prisoners are to be injured; and should his orders be transgressed, the head of the culprit will fly off in return."

The Princess, thinking the man who was addressing her had some authority over the others, requested him to tell them to give her a dress. The stranger instantly issued some directions to the mountaineers, which appear not to have been obeyed; at all events the dress was not produced, and the Princess continued her journey in her former pitiable plight.

* A kind of tunic.

The mountaineers halted once more before reaching the Alazan. Here the Murid who had accompanied the Princess all the way from Tsenondahl, — and who had indeed considered her to a certain extent his own property ever since he took possession of her on the belvidere of the *château*, — restored little Lydia to her arms.

At the same time Vassilissa came forward with Alexander, who was screaming for his wet nurse, and refused to be comforted although the mother offered herself as a substitute.

The mountaineers on their side were busy inspecting their plunder, and some of them began to strip the gold and silver from the holy pictures * which they had stolen from Tsenondahl. One of them showed the Princess a book in the Georgian language, and signified to her that he meant to cut it to pieces. The Princess supposes that the mountaineer imagined this book to be the Bible, or at all events some work connected with the Christian religion. Hence his determination, insultingly expressed, to destroy it.

The sacrilegious treatment of the holy pictures was of course deeply painful to the Princess and to all her companions who witnessed it.

The Murid in the red cap † now approached the Princess a second time, and spoke to her in Russian.

"You are acquainted with the fortifications of Telaff,

* Every room in a Russian house is provided with a picture of the Saviour, the Virgin, or some saint. These pictures, like those in the churches, are richly ornamented. See note to p. 19.

† This man afterwards turned out to be an Armenian.

and know whether we have any chance of making a successful attempt upon that town."

"I advise you to go there," she replied, "for I am certain none of you would ever return."

The Princess gave this answer because she was well aware that Telaff possessed but inefficient means of defence.

After trying various means for obtaining the precise information he required from the Princess, first flattering, then threatening her, the Murid of the red cap at last put the following question:

"How many troops are there in Telaff?"

The Princess replied without hesitation, "there is one regiment of Cossacks; there are four companies of infantry; and then there is the garrison. You would do well to go there."

"And we *shall* go there," concluded the Murid as he went away with very visible signs of annoyance.*

It was now time to continue the march.

Vassilissa took Alexander, while Lydia, wrapped up in a cloak, remained with her mother, who, as before, rode on horseback behind her faithful Murid.

As they proceeded towards the Alazan the Princess met the washerwoman Varvara, who was on horseback, carrying Tamara, the Princess's third child. There was some opportunity for conversation, of which the Princess took advantage.

"You are not afraid?" she said to Varvara.

"No, Princess," replied the latter; "the man who is taking charge of us is of a kind disposition. He gave

* However, the mountaineers did not attack Telaff, which was defended by a force far inferior to what the Princess had represented.

Tamara something to eat," she added, thinking more of the little girl than of herself.

A little further on the Princess's Murid gave her a handkerchief, and wished her to cover her face with it.

The Princess found subsequently that the women of good family in the Caucasus never go out without veils; but at that time she was only alarmed by the mountaineer's proposition, and was determined not to accede to it, as she was desirous of knowing herself by what dangers she was surrounded.

Soon afterwards rain began to fall, and continued until they came to the Alazan.

During the passage the child was taken from the Princess, but it was returned to her when she reached the other bank.

The Murid now offered to let the Princess sit down on the ground for a time; but her limbs had been so much shaken, and she was generally in such a state of lassitude, that she was afraid to change her position.

Euphrosyne, a little girl of fourteen, who was wearing a cloak and the straw hat of the little boy Alexander, passed the Princess, and attracted her attention by the violence of her sobbing. The subject of her grief was a mistake on the part of the mountaineers, who persisted in treating her as the daughter of a general—an honour to which Euphrosyne was naturally not accustomed.

When the Princess came up with the main body, she witnessed an extraordinary spectacle. Some of the Chechnians had dressed themselves in women's clothes, others wore children's hats—all of which would, doubtless, have amused the Princess, but for the state of

despondency into which she had fallen. Now and then a Lesghian or Chechnian would pass with silver forks and spoons stuck in his girdle.

About this time the Princess Orbeliani made her appearance at a distance. She had still her black dress, but her head was uncovered.

A little further on was Daredjana Gamgrelidzey, who was riding in an *arba* with some of the servants.

Daredjana, as she approached the Princess Chavchavadzey, told her she had just seen Shamil's son, Kazi-Machmat, that she had told him the Princess ought to have a horse to herself, and that he had promised to find her one.

Daredjana added that the Princess ought to take care of herself, and keep up her strength as much as possible, for the sake of her children, but that, as far as she (Daredjana) was concerned, she felt that she should not live through her captivity.

"If they do not kill me," she said, "I am sure I shall die all the same." *

The poor woman appeared to have a presentiment of the death which awaited her.

One of the servants who was in the *arba* with Daredjana, offered the half-naked Princess her wadded cloak, which the latter refused, saying that she should soon be able to get all she wanted, but that the servants would do well to keep what they had, as they would probably not have the same privileges.

* Fear had had such an effect upon Daredjana, that when she was in the belvidere her face became black and swollen. In her consternation, she tore the rings from her fingers, and threw them away.

The Princess Orbeliani now joined her sister, who, feeling that her voice was failing her, imagined she was dying, and gave her her little Lydia, enjoining her not to lose sight of her on any account. But the Murid would not allow the Princess Orbeliani to take the child, saying that she could not feed it, and that it would consequently die of hunger.

By this time the mountaineers were not far from the hill of Kontzhi, and they formed into closer order as they approached the narrow passage at the foot. At this moment the prisoners were all together, and formed the centre of the party. The Princess Orbeliani was immediately behind her sister.

Just as they were turning the corner of the hill, they were thrown into a state of terrible confusion by a volley of musketry and artillery, which not only deafened and alarmed the prisoners, but inflicted no small injury on the mountaineers. The Chechnians, however, wheeled suddenly round and took to flight,—at the same time not forgetting their prisoners and the rest of their booty.

They intended to make a circuit, and then continue their journey by the same route; but they were followed in their flight by repeated volleys from the Russian guns, and had to abandon this intention.

The Murid, who carried the Princess Chavchavadzey behind his saddle, headed the retreat, and his strong, swift horse flew like a bird.

The Princess Chavchavadzey had one arm in the Murid's girdle, and with the other held her child. At this moment the Princess only prayed that one of the Russian bullets might liberate her from her present and

future sufferings; which might easily have happened, as balls and shells were whistling and hissing past her every moment. The horse of a Chechnian, who was riding close to her, was struck by a shell and almost torn in two before her eyes; but the Princess escaped for a fate which, at the time, appeared far more horrible than death.

Looking round, the Princess saw a horse without a rider, and bearing a black dress which was waving in the wind. She at once imagined that this was the dress worn by her sister, who, she had no doubt, had fallen from her horse and perhaps been killed.

It was afterwards ascertained that the ominous-looking garment was the skirt belonging to the dress of one of the servants, who had been thrown from her horse, but was afterwards picked up by the mountaineers and found to be uninjured. Nevertheless the Princess was now so exhausted by fatigue, excitement, and fear, that she felt her little remaining strength fast forsaking her.

The only arm which she had at liberty for the support of her child was becoming more and more numbed; and it was impossible to extricate the other from the Murid's girdle.

The Princess was on the point of letting the infant escape from her convulsive embrace.

At last her arm fell almost powerless, and with it the weeping Lydia.

The Chechnian galloped on faster and faster. The mother still held the little girl by one foot; but, swinging to and fro, she was dashed at one time against the stirrup, at another against the side of the horse.

Either the Murid was determined not to stop, or he was unable to hear the mother's entreaties.

In another second the mother's fingers had loosened their feeble grasp, the child fell with a shriek to the ground, and the whole troop of flying mountaineers rode over the body.

Not one of the party would have escaped, had not Captain Hitrovo ceased his firing as soon as he perceived that the prisoners were falling beneath the blows of the Chechnians. In this manner, Daredjana Gamgrelidzêy, and several others perished; and the rest would certainly have shared her fate if the mountaineers had found themselves cut off in their retreat.

CHAP. V.

THE Chechnians having for the most part escaped in safety from the ambush party of the hill of Kontzhi, now rode on towards the wood. The trees grew thickly together, but this was scarcely any obstacle to the mountaineers, who were only too thankful that their retreat was so well protected. Cutting the branches away as they proceeded, they went first in one direction then in another, as if in search of some familiar path, but perhaps only with the view of eluding the Russians in case they should think fit to pursue them.

Owing to the mode of progress adopted by the mountaineers, it now became necessary for the party to break up again into separate groups, and it was not until the next day, when they were approaching the tower of Pohali, that they were reunited.

When we left the Princess Orbeliani she was riding immediately behind her sister, and the mountaineers were fast approaching the hill of Kontzhi.

She saw plainly with what difficulty the Princess Chavchavadzey was holding her little girl; and though she had borne her own sufferings with fortitude, she could not support those of her sister, and burst into tears. Moreover, with the condition of Lydia before her eyes, she imagined what the state of her own in-

fant might be, whom she had not seen since the morning.

The Princess Orbeliani went through the affair of the hill of Kontzhi without sustaining any injury, and fortunately was not a witness of the fatal accident which befel her sister's little girl. She had, however, beheld another episode, which was equally terrible.

Vassilissa had fallen from her horse, holding in her arms Alexander, the Princess Chavchavadzey's little boy; and some of the Chechnians, taking hold of the woman's arm, had dragged her a considerable distance along the ground. The terrified nurse might at such a moment have dropped the child, had she not been supported in her exertions by the voice of the Princess Orbeliani, who encouraged her and entreated her to put forth all her energy. However, before the Princess could ascertain the fate of the little boy, a cloak was thrown over her, and her horse was at the same time urged on at a rapid pace, so that she quite lost sight of Vassilissa, as well as the child.

Having reached the wood, the Princess Orbeliani and the party of mountaineers who now formed her ordinary escort became separated from the main body, and remained so until the evening.

At the approach of night, before the moon had risen, the escort made a halt; that is to say, they got off their horses and told the Princess to follow their example. They then spread a cloak on the ground and began to eat.

The Murid offered the Princess an apple, saying,—"You Georgians are accustomed to eat every day,

and you are no doubt hungry. Take this." But the Princess Orbeliani, in spite of her exhaustion, felt no wish to partake of the marauder's supper, and refused the proffered fruit.

The moon rose soon afterwards. The Princess's conductors got up, seated their captive on her horse, then mounted their own, and continued their journey.

At a very steep descent which they soon afterwards reached, three of the Chechnians dismounted and very politely held their prisoner's horse as she rode down the slope.

The second halt was made early the next morning, on the bank of some river.

Here they were joined by Madame Drancey, exhausted, beaten, and almost without clothing.

The unhappy French lady had indeed had her share of suffering during the short but eventful march.

Though she had followed a separate route in the midst of the herd of oxen, she found herself towards nightfall at the edge of the same wood which had been entered by the other captives. She had travelled the greater part of the way on foot, and the road had been both long and full of obstacles; but when she failed to keep up with the horsemen, the Murid made use of his whip to awaken new strength in the exhausted woman.

The first blow from the Chechnian's whip roused all the pride and all the anger of the already irritated Frenchwoman. She turned towards her insulter and expressed, in forcible but unfortunately quite unintelligible language, all the indignation and contempt which she felt for his conduct.

Of course it was in vain that Madame Drancey addressed her remarks to the Murid, and he did not cease to apply his whip to the unfortunate lady's shoulders whenever she lagged behind. At a later period, when the moon had risen, Madame Drancey, under the impression that her persecutors, as Mahometans, worshipped that orb, took the trouble to curse it. But the imprecation was not more intelligible than her expressions of indignation and contempt, the mountaineers being utterly unable to understand either the pantomime or the language of their captive.

Madame Drancey passed the night in the wood, where she had to sleep in company with the cattle and the Chechnians. The chief of the party having laid down on a large cloak, which he had previously extended along the ground, invited her to share it; but she informed him (of course in the French language) that she was not accustomed to receive such offers from strangers, and that she preferred to sleep with one of the oxen, whose back she soon converted into a pillow.

After an hour's repose the mountaineers got up, roused the cattle, and again pursued their way through the thick wood. Madame Drancey had more fatigue and more blows in store for her; but at dawn, as we have already seen, she joined the party who were conducting the Princess Orbeliani.

Shortly after the arrival of Madame Drancey, one of the nurses of the Princess Chavchavadzey's children came up. She had fared badly at the hill of Kontzhi, and had received serious injuries.

The Princess Orbeliani turned to the Murid—know-

ing the proficiency of the mountaineers in a certain kind of surgery — and asked him to dress the wounds of the unhappy woman.

He at once examined them, but said there was no danger, and that it would be only necessary to bandage her head.

The Murid then proceeded to make tea, and offered some to the Princess, who, however, suggested that he should take it to the wounded nurse. He refused in an abrupt manner, and said that she was not a Princess, and that it was a sin for her to drink tea.

It was impossible not to be astonished at the combination of much good nature with equal cruelty in the dispositions of these wild mountaineers; and striking examples of this were constantly occurring. Thus, for instance, when they had risen after the halt and were about to continue their journey, the Murid was very attentive to the Princess, and procured all possible comforts for her use on the road; but immediately afterwards he beat the wounded nurse in the most savage manner, merely because the Princess had requested that the poor woman might be placed on horseback.

Not having succeeded in her request, the Princess Orbeliani forgot her own fatigue, and assisted the nurse as well as she could. At first she led her or held her up, and at last took her on to her own horse and supported her there. Luckily the Murid made no objection to this.

After the last halt the party of the Princess Orbeliani had been joined by a very remarkable group of captives, consisting of a family of Georgians—an old woman

and her two sons. The children were both very young. One of them, a boy of about five years of age, was hanging round his mother's neck; the other, who was several years older, was walking before with his hands tied. The latter was so irritated that he abused his captors incessantly, now in the Georgian, now in the Tartar language, to which the mountaineer who was riding by his side responded by a shower of blows from his heavy whip. But the boy could not be silenced, although his shoulders were literally torn by the lashes. Even his old mother's earnest exhortations had no effect upon him; and the young Georgian continued to insult his captors for hours together. Finally, when he was exhausted with fatigue and had lost no inconsiderable quantity of blood, the indomitable child, with foam upon his lips, begged that his hands might be untied, that he might at all events have the pleasure of biting the man who was leading him away.

Struck with wonder at the behaviour of the child, the Princess was not less impressed by the fortitude and self-possession of the mother. For several versts the poor woman did not cease to address remonstrances to the mountaineer, whom she begged to make allowances for the impetuous nature of the boy, while she attempted at the same time to tranquillise her son. But she could only speak the Georgian language, and her words were lost upon the Chechnian.

Again, whenever they came to a stream, she would take some water in the palms of her hands, and either apply it to the parched lips of the boy, or else use it in washing his bleeding shoulders. She did not

notice that blood was flowing from her own feet, which were torn by the brambles and the sharp stones; and appeared equally unconscious of the weight of her second child, who was still hanging round her neck.

At the next halting-place, the old Georgian woman still continued her exertions. Tired and exhausted, she nevertheless climbed up a very steep rock in search of some herb with which she intended to dress her son's wounds. She slipped and fell, but not until she had reached the plant she had been so anxious to obtain, and lost no time in applying it to her son's shoulders.

It was impossible to witness the fortitude of these people under their afflictions without accepting it as a lesson not to murmur against hardships which, in comparison with theirs, were mere trifles.

To return to the other captives from Tsenondahl, the Princess Nina Baratoff appeared to have met with no adventures of importance since the passage of the Alazan.

Her journey towards the wood had of course been interrupted by the attack of Captain Hitrovo, and she had galloped away at the greatest possible speed, supported by a Chechnian at each stirrup. The Princess had been thrown first to one side, then to the other, but had never lost her seat. She was still constantly accompanied by several of the servants from Tsenondahl, and also by her young captor, who behaved to her with the greatest respect.

The Princess Nina was especially anxious about her aunt the Princess Orbeliani; and on the following day she was delighted, as she was travelling through the wood, to hear her voice. The Princess Orbeliani was just then speaking of her niece; but although her words

were audible, she herself was completely concealed by the denseness of the thicket.

The Princess Baratoff arrived at the tower of Pohali before her aunt, and was there obliged to separate from her young and gallant Chechnian. Wishing to reward him for his disinterested and respectful behaviour, the Princess took a gold watch and chain from her neck and presented it to him.

In the meantime the adventures of the Princess Chavchavadzey had been as follows:—

After she had lost her little child at the hill of Kontzhi, the Murid behind whom she was sitting, galloped in front of the whole party. The Princess, arriving in the wood one of the first, was there placed on a separate horse. Her conductor thought that this arrangement would enable her to proceed more easily and more rapidly; but the change was not a beneficial one. Weak and almost exhausted, she was unable to sit firmly in the saddle; and at the first impediment, in the shape of a branch, which stood in her way, she fell, and the horse went on without her.

The Princess was now placed on another horse, which, she remembers, was entirely white. The mountaineers continued their journey by a circuitous route, fearing they might yet be pursued by the Russians. They had frequently to clear a passage through the trees for themselves and their horses; and this they effected, like the party who had conducted the Princess Orbeliani, by means of their *shashkas* and long daggers.

The road was up-hill all the way. When the mountaineers had completed some portion of the ascent

they halted; then spread a horse-cloth at the foot of a tree they had just felled, invited the Princess to take a seat, and afterwards sat down by her side, surrounded by their horses. Some of them produced bread and meat, and offered it to their captive, who, however, would accept nothing but water. They brought her some in a small leather pouch, with a neck formed out of an empty cartridge, through which she had to drink.

The Chechnians soon fell asleep, probably fatigued by their rapid retreat.

The Princess was now, for the first time, left to her own meditations, and could appreciate the full extent of her misfortunes. She had at present only to be informed of her husband's death, and she would then be alone, uncertain as to the fate of her children — with the exception of one who had perished at her feet,—and a prisoner without hope in the hands of barbarous enemies.

These reflections overcame her completely; but Providence had pity on her in her despair.

In the midst of the silence which reigned around she recognised the voice of the wet nurse of her little nephew, George Orbeliani, proceeding from the darkness of the wood. The woman, who was a Russian, was nursing the child and singing to it after the manner of the country, in the hope of tranquillising it and sending it to sleep.

"Heaven be praised," exclaimed the Princess, as she listened to the nurse's song. "This one, then, is certainly saved. But what has happened to the others?"

A little while afterwards the Princess heard the following words:—

"Is there no Christian present? Let me only hear you speak, and I will come to you, for I am all alone."

This was Nina the servant, who in the morning, seeing that the Princess Chavchavadzey was almost without clothes and thoroughly wet, had offered her her wadded petticoat. The latter now called out, and Nina hastened towards her.

The Chechnians by this time were fast asleep. There was no fire, and it was bitterly cold in the wood.

The Princess, in her meagre clothing, still damp from the passage of the Alazan, was shivering; and Nina, with the view of warming her, embraced her, and lay down by her side, entwining herself as much as possible around her. But these efforts were in vain, the Princess was trembling from ague.

While persisting in her endeavours to warm her mistress, Nina related to her, among other things, how, when the house at Tsenondahl was being plundered, the mountaineers had dragged her through all the rooms with a dagger at her breast, in order to make her point out the secret treasures which they imagined must exist. She had been taken away last of all from the house.

Thus the Princess Chavchavadzey passed the first night of her captivity without closing her eyes for a moment, although sleep was so necessary to recruit her exhausted strength.

The next day at dawn the mountaineers rose and set off with their captives.

As they continued to ascend the hill, the earth crumbled and fell beneath their feet. To remain on horseback was impossible; and accordingly they all

dismounted, and climbed up on foot, catching hold of the brushwood which grew in patches on the slope, so as to avoid falling.

Nina and a Georgian servant named Katerina, who had joined them that morning, assisted the Princess in her endeavours to reach the summit of the hill; but in spite of their help the latter soon became unable to proceed, and fell down utterly exhausted. The mountaineers approached their fainting captive and threatened her with their daggers, to make her continue the ascent. But these menaces had no effect upon the Princess, who at this moment would have welcomed death as a release from her sufferings; and one of the Chechnians, seeing the inefficacy of such brutality, took her on his shoulders and began to carry her up the hill. After proceeding a certain distance the mountaineer felt fatigued by his burden, and transferred the Princess to the shoulders of one of his comrades; and in this manner she was shifted from one to the other, until at last she was deposited at the summit, which was covered with long luxuriant grass. The mountaineers, who had proceeded leisurely up the hill, having now lost all fear of a pursuit, halted for some time when they had completed the ascent, in order to give the Princess an opportunity of regaining a portion of her strength. But the other captives were not allowed to halt, and were taken on without delay in the direction of the Pohali tower.

The Princess, on recovering her consciousness, noticed a horse grazing near her with nothing but a sack on its back. From the mouth of the sack issued a delicate

little foot, wearing a child's slipper, which the terrified parent instantly recognised with a shudder. The mysterious canvass did indeed contain the Princess's daughter Tamara, who, however, was full of life, and hastened to throw herself round the neck of her weeping mother. The mountaineers had fastened her to the horse's saddle, and had covered her with the sack in order to guard her face from the branches of the trees which grew on the hillside.

The unhappy child was allowed to remain for a short time with her mother on the white horse; but she was then taken away and given to one of the Chechnians. The little girl screamed; but the mother was not sorry when she was removed, for, in her feeble condition, she feared she might lose this one as she had lost Lydia.

All the Chechnians afterwards stopped for about ten minutes at a lake, where they offered up their morning prayers. Here the Princess met Eli, a little boy six years of age, belonging to the household of Tsenondahl. He was riding carelessly on horseback, and imitating the Chechnians at their prayers. The Princess asked him whether he had seen any of her children, and was much rejoiced when she found that he had passed the previous night in company with Salome, her eldest daughter.

They continued their journey, bearing constantly to the left, through meadows covered with magnificent grass. Seeing the feeble condition of the Princess, the mountaineers now frequently halted, in order that she might enjoy a few minutes' rest.

At the next general halt, a large party of moun-

taineers and captives were assembled together. The Chechnians killed a pony and fried it for their breakfast. The Princess, who was sitting down with Katerina at her side, heard at a short distance the voice of her daughter Tamara, who was conversing with her aunt the Princess Orbeliani, and she was much cheered by finding that her sister was still alive.

Here the ague, from which the Princess had already suffered, again declared itself. One of the mountaineers brought her a cloak to cover herself with. This was the very garment in which Lydia had been wrapped up until the moment of her death; and on seeing it the Princess could not restrain her tears, which were the first she had shed since her captivity, and which afforded her no small relief.

To this flood of tears succeeded hope; and the anxious mother endeavoured to persuade herself that her child had by some providential means escaped death.

In the meantime the foremost of the party had already started; and the servant Katerina began to be afraid that her mistress and herself would be left behind. But the mountaineers were still at breakfast; and as soon as they had finished, they continued their route, conducting the captives along a path which was bordered and frequently intercepted by bushes and brushwood. In the bushes the Princess noticed some very beautiful white flowers which she had never seen before.

The Armenian in the blue *chouha* and the red cap with the *chalma* now came up and addressed the Princess, as before, in excellent Russian.

"Princess," he commenced, "they say you have lost your child."

"Yes," was the answer.

"Why did you throw it away then? The mountaineers tell me you threw it away yourself."

"How is it you are not ashamed to say such a thing?" replied the Princess. And in a few words she related the incident as it had occurred.

The Armenian made a pretence of comforting her, by means of unavailing and common-place assurances, after which he said to her, all at once,

"Do you know, too, that your husband is taken?"

"That cannot be," returned the Princess, though at the same time her heart was failing her.

"And why not?" continued the Armenian, with a smile.

"Because my husband would not allow himself to fall alive into the hands of the Chechnians." And with that the Princess terminated this hateful conversation.

Nothing of importance occurred again before the party reached the tower of Pohali, if we except certain sufferings undergone by the Princess Chavchavadzey. For instance, she had to walk some distance on foot, along the edge of a precipice. But her swollen feet were now quite benumbed; and she ascended and descended the steep hills in the vicinity of the Pohali tower, without the least pain from the sand and stones which strewed her path.

The prisoners were surprised to hear the sound of fire-arms; but it was explained to them that these reports only proceeded from Shamil's camp, where the

mountaineers were expressing their joy at the success of their attack.

Approaching still nearer, the captives saw on the hill next the tower a number of tents, which they were told formed the camp of the Lesghians; and at the very gates of the tower they were shown the tent of Shamil himself.

CHAP. VI.

THE final hardship with which the prisoners had to contend, before reaching their temporary resting-place, was the ascent of the hill on which the tower of Pohali stands, and which was now occupied by the Lesghian camp.

Having surmounted this last difficulty, they found themselves in the midst of the Lesghians, whom they observed to be very different in appearance from their captors the Chechnians. The Chechnians were of lofty stature, elegantly formed, handsome, and richly armed and equipped. The Lesghians were short, broad-shouldered, ugly, and poorly dressed, but at the same time well armed. They were extremely coarse and even ferocious in appearance, or, as Madame Drancey laconically expressed it, "*c'était des gens durs.*" These men form the mass of Shamil's army, whereas the Chechnians are his picked troops, and are only employed by the Iman * for the most daring enterprises.

The Princess Orbeliani, the Princess Baratoff, Madame Drancey, and nearly all the other captives had already entered the tower of Pohali, and the Princess Chavchavadzey, with her companion Katerina, were just approaching the camp, when the men who had escorted them suddenly disappeared among the Lesghians,

* Shamil styles himself Iman of Chechni and Daghestan.

fearing, no doubt, that they would be called to account for the loss of the Princess's child. The captives were left to be surrounded and stared at by a crowd of gaping mountaineers; and their position was becoming insupportable, when a Chechnian rode up, and informed them that they were to proceed to Shamil's camp.

The Princess Chavchavadzey positively refused. She was overcome with shame at the costume she was still obliged to wear, and declared she would not appear before Shamil, nor willingly before any one else, in so disgraceful a plight. At the same time she heard the voice of a fellow captive proceeding from the tower; it was one of the little girls belonging to the household of Tsenondahl, who had perceived her mistress, and was now asking her to come to her. Soon afterwards she saw an officer in the Russian uniform hurrying towards her, and recognised one of her relatives, Prince Ivan Chavchavadzey.

Prince Ivan had been left in command of the Pohali tower, and, after a desperate defence, had been taken prisoner, with the remains of the garrison. This garrison, at the moment of the attack, had only consisted of thirty peasants serving in the militia, and naturally could make no effectual resistance against Shamil's entire army.

The Prince approached his suffering relative with a look of despair. He was pale, fearfully depressed, and could only utter a few broken phrases, such as —.

"You, Princess? . . . What a calamity! . . . To the tower . . . you will be quieter there," and so forth.

The Princess followed him to Shamil's camp, which was closed on all sides, and which stood at the entrance to the tower.

The Princess Orbeliani, who was in the tower when her sister arrived there, states that the appearance of the latter produced the saddest impression on all present.

Her chemise, her only remaining garment, was much torn; one of her breasts was terribly swollen; her dishevelled hair was now entangled with brambles; her shoulders were covered with clotted blood, and her feet, inflamed and bleeding, were almost without skin.

As the exhausted lady tottered into the room, she called for a glass of water, but was so enfeebled that she could only drink one mouthful.

The other captives were in a much better state, though they also presented a very melancholy picture. The room in which they were all collected * was so full, that it was impossible to form a passage through them as they sat or lay on the ground. They were all crying and groaning; the children were screaming; and many of the peasant women and servants, having reached a state of ecstacy, gave vent to their grief in song and improvised words appropriate to the situation, which, under the circumstances, affected all present.

In order to comprehend the full force and beauty of these improvisations, it is, of course, necessary to be acquainted with the Georgian language, which is very rich in picturesque and poetical expressions, and has

* This room was on the ground floor. The one above it was occupied by the male prisoners. The top story, with the roof, had been blown away by Shamil's artillery.

borrowed many of its metaphors and images from the East.* The complaints sung by the Georgian captives consisted of lamentations on the fate of the Princesses, and included such passages as the following:—"What have we lived to see? The flower and light of our Kahetia are in the hands of the hated Lesghians. Let us forget our own sufferings, and pray for the Princesses and their children. With them perish all the beauty and all the hope of our Kahetia."

The evidences of sincere affection contained in the words of these Georgian women, expressed, too, in music which was in itself deeply affecting, overpowered the Princesses; and for some time they could do nothing but sob.

But their attention was soon taken up by their children. The Princess Orbeliani had found her son George, and began to nurse him. The Princess Chavchavadzey had two of her daughters, Marie and Tamara, sleeping by her side; and she would have felt something like composure if she could only have been certain that the other two, Salome and Alexander, were safe.

Among the captives in the tower was the nurse who had been so badly wounded at the hill of Khontzhi. She had received as many as six sabre (*shashka*) cuts. The Princess made her change her position, in which she was far from being at her ease, laid her down on the ground, and did all she could to comfort her.

At this moment a Georgian girl approached the Prin-

* Many of the Georgian names are both sonorous and musical, such, for instance, as Tsenondahl, Orbeliani, Alazan (pronounced Ah-lah-zahn), Tamara, &c.

cess Chavchavadzey with an infant in her arms, and said to her, in a touching voice, "Princess, the Chechnians have killed my mother, and have left this little child without a nurse. For the last thirty-six hours she has been without nourishment, and will die if you do not have pity on her and take her to your breast."

The young Georgian's request was readily complied with; and the infant eagerly satisfied its hunger, and then quietly fell asleep. Soon afterwards the Princess herself felt much relieved; and the thought involuntarily occurred to her, that Providence, in saving the life of this little child, had at the same time sent it to replace for a while her little Lydia, and that thus she herself had escaped a great danger.

Vassilissa now entered the tower with her little charge Alexander; but he was in a dreadful condition. He was insensible and motionless. His hands and feet swung to and fro as he was carried along; his head was thrown back; his teeth, or rather his gums, were clenched; and his eyes were closed. It afterwards appeared that the child had been separated from his wet nurse all the way from Tsenondahl, and that he had been almost entirely without food. The piece of sugar which the Chechnian had given him during the first halt had soon fallen out of his hands, and Vassilissa could only give him water and, on one occasion, a few nuts, which she had the precaution to chew before putting them into the infant's mouth. The little boy was carried to his distressed mother, who instantly fed him, when he gradually revived, and soon afterwards fell asleep.

Towards nightfall the captives were supplied with

supper, which consisted of roast mutton, bread, and water. The Princess Orbeliani, who had not tasted any meat for two days, now could not eat a mouthful. The Princess Chavchavadzey took a small piece of bread, but was unable to swallow it. The only persons who were able to satisfy their hunger were Madame Drancey, who had already consoled herself, and the Princess Baratoff, who had suffered less than the others. The Princess Baratoff had, moreover, some hope that her captivity would be a very short one, some of the captives having suggested to her that Shamil, when he was informed of the slight resources of her family, would probably allow her to be ransomed for a very small sum.*

Last of all arrived Salome, the Princess Chavchavadzey's eldest little girl (six years of age), with the Chechnians who had conducted her all the way. She chattered incessantly, and said that she had met her aunt in the wood, and had asked where Lydia was, but that she had been unable to obtain an answer.

The children were now fed and put to sleep; and the rest of the prisoners lay down as they could.

Early the next morning (July 6th), the prisoners were awakened by the trumpets of Shamil's band, who were sounding the *réveil*. The strain was pleasing, and appeared to be imitated from some of the Russian marches; the execution also was tolerable.

The prisoners were soon on their feet; and before

* The Princess Baratoff's father was a poor man, and paralysed. Her mother and brothers were no more. Of her two sisters, one lived with some distant relatives, and the other was being educated in the Institution of the Society of St. Nina at Tiflis.

long, Prince Ivan Chavchavadzey entered with his servant Simon and the under-officer Patapoff.

"We are prisoners here," said Prince Ivan. "How it happened we must tell you another time; but at present we have some good news to give you. We have asked Shamil to allow us to accompany you on the journey to Dargi-Vedenno, where you are now to be taken; and Shamil has granted our request."

The captives were delighted at receiving this information. The prospect of being surrounded by Christians and fellow countrymen on their long and difficult journey was additionally welcome to them from the fact, that on leaving the tower of Pohali they would lose sight of the Chechnians and be conducted by the Lesghians, a far more brutal, ferocious, and brigandlike tribe.

Hardly had this news been communicated to the prisoners when Shamil's son, Kazi-Machmat, entered, attended by several Naibs. Many of the latter spoke Russian fluently.

Kazi-Machmat asked for the Princess Chavchavadzey. The Princess was pointed out to him. She was sitting on the floor, and was surrounded by a number of other captives. The Naibs asked after her health, advised her to reconcile herself to God's will, spoke to her of fate, and assured her that there was no evil without good.

The Princess answered that it was useless for them to attempt to console her; that she had really suffered the worst of her misfortunes, and, consequently, that she should be able to support all that awaited her; and finally, that she trusted in the protection of Shamil.

The Naibs now attempted to justify their incursions

into Kahetia, and the attack on Tsenondahl. They pretended that they had invaded Georgia in the hope of inducing the population to join Shamil (as if the population could find any inducement in having their houses pillaged and burned!). They also assured the Princess that several of the princes had given in their submission to Shamil; and when she expressed her entire disbelief of this statement, they attempted to prove it by exhibiting certain documents written in the Georgian language, which they declared were the letters to Shamil of which they had spoken. The Princess took the pretended letters into her hand, and found that they were pages torn out of the account-book of the steward of an estate in Kahetia.

"These are not letters, but accounts," said the Princess Chavchavadzey as she returned the pages to the Naibs with a smile.

"How can you tell?" they inquired with *naïveté*, supposing, no doubt, that the Princess was unable to read Georgian.

"Because I have examined them," answered the Princess.

It afterwards appeared that the Naibs went away and informed Shamil of the Princess's lingual acquirements, and, in reply, were desired to trouble the captives no more with their conversation.

Shamil, who was anxious to commence without delay the negotiations for the Princesses' liberation, told them to send any letters they chose to their relatives at Tiflis, and at the same time supplied them with a sheet of paper, a wooden pen, and a piece of wool saturated with

ink — the ordinary writing materials of the Caucasus. The Princess Chavchavadzey, indignant at the treatment she had been subjected to, and especially at the recent imposture attempted by the Naibs, refused to take advantage of the opportunity; but her sister wrote these few lines to General Read*: —

"General, we and the whole family are in captivity. We are alive, but in want of everything. Come to our assistance, and inform our relatives of our situation. Address to us at Shamil's house, Dargi-Vedenno."

This letter was then signed by the Princess Chavchavadzey, and given to the messenger.

Neither of the Princesses sent a word to Prince David Chavchavadzey. They feared lest the mountaineers, hearing to whom the letter was to be taken, might inform them that he was dead.

Shamil's messenger went away; and breakfast was brought in, consisting, as on the previous day, of roast mutton and bread.

The Princess Chavchavadzey was again unable to swallow a mouthful; but all the others took a certain amount of refreshment.

During the breakfast, a man with a white *chalma* round his cap, handsome as to features, but repulsive in expression, made his appearance. This was the Murid who had captured Madame Drancey, and conducted her from Tsenondahl to the Pohali tower. He invited the Princess Chavchavadzey to accompany him to Shamil;

* Commander-in-chief of the *corps d'armée* of the Caucasus, and civil governor of the Caucasian and Trans-Caucasian provinces.

but the Princess answered that she was astonished Shamil had not asked to see her before, as he had had such important things to say to her, which he had nevertheless preferred to communicate through his son and the Naibs, and that she could not understand what he had to tell her now. In conclusion, she added that she did not believe Shamil had expressed any desire to see her at all.

"If you are afraid, take your sister with you," continued the Murid.

"I shall neither go myself, nor allow my sister to go," answered the Princess sharply. "I have already said," she continued, "that in this dress I cannot present myself to any of your chiefs."

Perplexed by the angry and determined tone of the Princess's replies, the Murid turned silently away and retired. Indeed it was generally remarked that a bold, decided bearing always had its effect upon the mountaineers, who were evidently surprised and confused at meeting with direct opposition from their captives. This opposition proceeding from women, was only the more effective. The tribes of the Caucasus treat their own women so much like slaves, that the notion of a woman being disobedient had probably never entered their heads. Accordingly, when the Princesses refused to obey the orders of their captors, the latter were at first astounded, then abashed, and finally looked upon their prisoners with something like reverence.

When the Murid had gone, some of Shamil's personal attendants entered the room, and proposed that the captives should select one of their party to go to Shamil's

tent, and choose from among the spoil whatever clothing they might require. The Princesses turned round to the servants; and one of them instantly volunteered to set off on the proposed mission. This was the laundress Varvara, a Polish woman, who went straight to Shamil's tent, where she found the Mountain Chief, with two of his Murids on guard by his side. In the corners and along the sides of the tent were heaps of bundles; and the servant was told to take whichever she liked. Naturally enough she chose the largest, and carried it forthwith to her mistress.

The bundle contained, among other things, the following: — a dark silk blouse, a *katiba* * (which had already been stripped of its pearls and buttons), several pairs of stockings, and a number of shoes, which, however, were all of the same size and for the same foot. Marie, the Princess Chavchavadzey's second daughter, had counted upon obtaining some kind of *chaussure;* but she was obliged to remain barefooted for the present.

The articles were divided among the captives according to their various wants. The Princess Chavchavadzey's costume was of the most fantastic character. Her hair was gathered up and confined by a bright-coloured cotton handkerchief. Her figure was enveloped in the dark silk blouse, over which she wore the katiba, which was made of crimson velvet.

When the female captives had finished dressing themselves, they looked through the door, and saw

* A *katiba* is a very pretty cloak, or mantle, worn in Georgia. It is usually made of velvet, and embroidered round the neck with pearls, while the edges are trimmed with sable or some other fur.

the Georgian militiamen and peasants, who were coming down stairs from the first floor.

The men had a careworn and exhausted look, which excited considerable sympathy among the women, while the sufferings of the latter, of course, produced a profound impression on the men. The male and female captives were making an attempt at mutual consolation, when the Lesghians interrupted the conversation by telling them all to prepare for the road; and in a few minutes the prisoners, who had scarcely recovered from the fatigue of their former journey, had now to set off on one which was to last twenty-two days.

CHAP. VII.

At the outset of the journey, Prince Ivan gave his horse up to the Princess Chavchavadzey; but the Lesghians soon provided her with another, which is described as having been singularly ugly, but equally quiet and comfortable to ride upon. Before the prisoners started, all their names were written down, and a separate conductor was appointed to each. The Princess Chavchavadzey, accompanied by Prince Ivan, went in front of the rest; but stopping and looking back, she saw her sister on horseback, waiting at the gate of the tower, where she appeared to be expecting some one. In the sequel it appeared that the Princess Orbeliani and some of the other prisoners had been delayed in order to assist in some new project of registration, the Princess being called upon to give her own name, her sister's, and those of all the captives who had been taken from the house at Tsenondahl.

At last the whole party were in motion, escorted now by Lesghians, and not as before by Chechnians, all of whom had taken another route after leaving the tower of Pohali. The Chechnians, as has been already observed, are to the Lesghians what in other nations the aristocracy are to the working classes. The brutality of the Lesghians was not long in showing itself. One of them having

quarrelled about something or other with George Orbeliani's wet nurse, wished to kill the child, and would certainly have done so but for the interference of Prince Chavchavadzey, who snatched the child from the hands of the Lesghian. The affair ended here, and the child was saved; but soon afterwards Prince Ivan was punished for his audacity by having his arms tied behind him.

In course of time the party arrived at a narrow passage between two lofty heights, when all the prisoners, with the exception of the Princess Chavchavadzey, were ordered to dismount, as they would soon have to ascend a steep, rocky hill. In this ascent the Princess had considerable difficulty in keeping on her horse, a difficulty which was much increased by her having to hold up little Alexander's wet nurse, who besides her foster-son was carrying his sister Tamara. Fortunately some of the militiamen from the Pohali tower were near, and assisted the nurse in supporting her double burden.

After a difficult ascent there was, as usual, a descent of equal difficulty, and this second slope was remarkable for being covered with snow which was not yet melted, —a sight which, though striking, is by no means rare in the mountains of the Caucasus; for on one side of an elevation you may find all the fertility of the South, while on the opposite one (supposing it to have a northern aspect), there will be perpetual snow.

On this snowy descent the Princess Chavchavadzey was taken off her horse and supported by the mountaineers as she walked, which, however, did not prevent her from sinking nearly two feet into the snow. Little Tamara, who was afraid of falling, began to cry; and one

of the Lesghians had to take the other child, Alexander, from the nurse, and give him to Prince Ivan, who, with all his willingness to carry him, had a great deal of trouble in doing so, from the fact that his elbows were tied together. However, he managed somehow or other to hold him.

Having descended the whole length of the snowy slope, the prisoners found themselves on the banks of a river. Here the Princess Chavchavadzey was much alarmed by the fall of her little boy's wet nurse, who was riding with Tamara in her arms. The saddle turned under her, but in falling neither herself nor the child were injured.

The party had soon afterwards to ascend another height by a spiral path, which occupied five hours. Being in advance, the Princess Chavchavadzey could not see any of her companions until she found herself at the top, when she paused, not for rest, but in order to wait for the others. From this point the Princess could see the whole of the captives of Tsenondahl, who were ascending on foot, and holding on to their horses' tails. When they had all reached the summit, the Princess Orbeliani told her sister of the accident which had happened to little Tamara. The child had become separated from her brother's wet nurse, and was inconsolable for her loss. Her crying put the Lesghians out of patience. They placed her on the ground, and left her there alone, about halfway up the hill. Fortunately for the weeping and forsaken child, the Princess Orbeliani soon came to her, accompanied by some

militiamen, who took her in their arms and carried her up the height.

On the whole the presence of the militiamen was highly beneficial to the captives, who on several occasions received invaluable services from them.

A little further on the Princess Chavchavadzey, who was still in front of the others, had a great deal of trouble in going up a steep path which was intercepted in many places by brushwood. Prince Ivan went up to her with little Alexander in his arms. The child had a piece of unmelted snow on his lips. "I have been carrying him all day," said the Prince, "and have been waiting in vain for his wet nurse. But she is some distance behind, and I am obliged to give the child snow to quiet it a little. Don't be indignant, Princess, if I even let him fall, for you see I have not full power over my arms."

The Princess turned round to her conductor and asked permission to take the child herself.* But he refused, under the pretext that she had been described in the list of prisoners as travelling alone, and not with her son. Fortunately about this time several of the women came up, and among them was the wet nurse, who had again taken possession of little Tamara, and who was now accompanied by Varvara the laundress. The Princess told the nurse to give Tamara to the laundress, and to take Alexander from the Prince. The nurse did so, but at the same time observed that she was herself so exhausted with walking that she was not

* The captives had no trouble in conversing with the Lesghians, many of whom speak Russian, or, at all events, Georgian.

sure she could carry the child. The Princess accordingly requested the Lesghians to give the nurse another horse. The Lesghians made a great fuss, getting off and on their horses and changing them; but as the Princess was at this moment sent on in front, she could not see whether the nurse was provided with the horse as requested, or whether she was forced to continue her journey on foot.

In the meantime night was coming on, and all the prisoners were dreadfully fatigued, but there was as yet no sign of any intention to stop. Some time afterwards the wished-for halt was made. The Lesghian who was conducting the Princess took her off her horse, invited her to sit down on the grass, and began to pray. On this, as on all subsequent occasions, the Princess observed that the Chechnians and Lesghians were most fervent in their devotions, becoming thoroughly absorbed in their performance, and utterly unconscious of everything around them.

During this halt she observed among the captives, as they arrived, the wife of the clerk of the Kizishevi church—a young and beautiful woman. Her conductor exchanged a few words with the Lesghian who was accompanying the Princess, and then began to call to the prisoners who were behind. Madame Drancey next came up, and entered into conversation with the Princess Chavchavadzey. They were both astonished at the change which appeared to have come over them: now they feared nothing, and were comparatively insensible to pain.

The Princess had to separate from Madame Drancey

when they started afresh, but before they parted she addressed the following request to the governess of her children :—

"I feel," she commenced, "that I shall never arrive at our destination. If I should die on the road, take care of my little ones, and do all you can to lessen their misfortune."

"You may be assured," replied Madame Drancey with earnestness, "that I will do all that is in my power for them."

The Lesghians were anxious to pass the night in the nearest *aoul** ; and accordingly, in spite of the darkening twilight, the prisoners had to continue their journey. The Princess Chavchavadzey, as she descended the last slope — walking, and leaning on the arm of her conductor, who at the same time led her horse, — saw on the other side of a river, which ran at the foot of the mountain, a number of lights. These lights proceeded from a collection of *aouls*.

When they reached the river, which was not very wide, the conductor placed the Princess on her horse, and jumped up behind her. In this manner they crossed the stream. On the other side they were joined by a girl of about twelve years of age, who was on horseback, and rode at great speed. The Princess asked her where the other captives from Tsenondahl were. The girl answered that they were gradually advancing.

Shortly before midnight they reached one of the *aouls*, with which the nearest mountain was dotted

* The *aouls* are the villages of the Caucasus ; for the most part, mere collections of huts.

all over. The Princess, as she passed the huts, heard the Georgian language spoken in nearly every one. This was explained by the fact that a number of prisoners from Georgia had already been brought to this *aoul*, and distributed among the huts which composed it. Some of the prisoners asked the Princess what part of Georgia she had been taken from, and were much astonished when she informed them that she came from Tsenondahl.

The Princess was put to pass the night in a cattle-shed. This shed was divided into three compartments by means of branches. The first was full of cattle; the second contained Lêsghians, who lost no time in making a fire on the earthen floor, and preparing their supper; and the Princess was taken into the third, which was already occupied by Prince Ivan, six militiamen, and several women from Tsenondahl and other parts.

To the Princess's inquiries about her children, Prince Ivan could only answer that he had not seen them lately, and that they were being taken on by a different road, which was said to be much shorter than the one by which the Princess was travelling.

Having taken up their positions as well as they could in this dismal, dirty, and suffocating caravansary, the prisoners were even then not sure that this was the worst they would have to experience, for there were a number of captives not yet arrived.

At midnight voices were heard outside the cow-shed, and immediately afterwards the Princess Baratoff entered with Marie Chavchavadzey (who was now always with her) and the nurse who had been so terribly wounded.

"Is my aunt Varvara Elinichna* here?" said the Princess Baratoff, who, to the astonishment of the prisoners, had preserved all her costume intact, and possessed even her rings and the valuable pins which fastened her *tavsakravi.*†

She was informed that the Princess Orbeliani had not yet arrived.

As soon as her eyes became accustomed to the obscurity of the cow-shed, the Princess Baratoff recognised most of her friends, and sat down by the side of the Princess Chavchavadzey, to share her grief, which was now as intense as on the first night after her capture. She imagined her sister and children, of whom she could hear nothing, must have met with some terrible accident. Neither of the Princesses could sleep, and at dawn they were still awake and anxiously expecting the arrival of their relations, of which, however, there was no sign.

In the morning, July 7th, they were allowed to go out into the fresh air. Here they were surrounded by a number of female prisoners from various villages in Kahetia, among whom they noticed an Armenian woman, the wife of a merchant named Antonoff. She had been taken with her four children, the eldest of whom was not more than five years old. She carried each in turn, and sometimes the three youngest all at once. The women had scarcely become acquainted with one another when they perceived that they had been joined by a stranger. This was a Chechnian named Nishka. He spoke Russian fluently, and going up to the

* That is to say, Varvara the daughter of Eli.

† The rich head-dress of Georgia.

Princess Chavchavadzey, whom he at once discovered, informed her that he had been told to meet the captives at this place, prepare their breakfast, and conduct them to the *aoul* of Dido.

After hearing what he had to say, the Princess replied that that was well enough, but that she felt more interested about the fate of her sister and children.

"Do not disturb yourself about them," answered Nishka, "I have already sent to inquire for them, and am now expecting the answer. When we leave this *aoul* you shall join them, and continue your journey in their company."

A few minutes afterwards a messenger arrived with the news that the other prisoners were halting on the road by which the Princess Chavchavadzey and her party would have to pass. The Princess did not altogether believe this, thinking the Chechnian was only anxious to tranquillise her, and make her partake of the food he had prepared. In spite of her suspense she managed to eat some of the breakfast, which was much better than any other meal that was offered to them either before or afterwards. It consisted of warm boiled milk, fresh mountain cheese, and newly made *lavashi*.*

After breakfast they all rose and continued their journey, those who belonged to the Chavchavadzey family receiving each a separate horse. Prince Ivan had his own horse, which had been taken with him at the tower of Pohali. His arms were still tied, and were not set at liberty until the party entered the *aoul* of Dido.

* That is to say, bread in the form of muffins or crumpets, of various thicknesses and dimensions.

Behind him rode little Marie, whom the Lesghians had attached firmly to his saddle. The Prince's horse, uncontrolled by its rider, and unaccustomed to the bad roads and the wild nature of the country, was constantly starting and losing its footing on the steep slopes. This was a new and incessant cause of anxiety to the Princess Chavchavadzey. She feared the horse would fall and crush her little girl, who, as has been said, was tied to the saddle.

The fears of the mother were not long being partially realised. The prisoners had to pass a river, which, though narrow, descended at such a steep incline that it resembled a small waterfall. In crossing this stream it was necessary at the same time to ascend it, so as to meet the current. The captives, some on horseback and others on foot, performed this difficult operation in safety, with the exception of Prince Chavchavadzey, whose horse for some time would not approach the stony bed as the foaming cascade poured noisily over it. The animal began by kicking, and ended by dismounting his rider and the little girl who had been tied to the saddle. The Princess flew to her daughter, who fortunately had not suffered much from her fall. Her elbow was slightly bruised, but that was all, and Marie soon made her mamma laugh by getting into a passion with General Read, who, when playing with her in his garden at Tiflis about a month previously, had caused her to slip and hurt the very same arm.

The Tsenondahl captives had now been joined by a number of others from different parts of Kahetia; in consequence of which they travelled at a much

slower pace, while the addition to their party had also the effect of increasing considerably its original and picturesque appearance. Among various peculiar figures and groups, the Princess Chavchavadzey was particularly struck by the appearance of the unhappy little children in their sacks dangling on each side of the donkeys across whose backs they were attached. The Princess also remembered the painful effect produced on the captives by the trophies of the Lesghians, some of whom bore long poles with human hands * fastened to the top.

But above all the Princess was impressed by the conduct of two captive children — the sons of a Kahetian priest — who were taking care of their younger sister.

The eldest was a boy of fourteen, who had been wounded in the head, and who from loss of blood was so pale and so weak that his death seemed imminent at every step. Notwithstanding this he would not leave his sister for an instant, but carried her in his arms, until at last he fell down utterly exhausted. As he was expiring he confided the little girl to his brother, who was about twelve years of age, with an injunction not to give her up to any one, but to take care of her himself to the very last moment.

Altogether there was a great deal of heroism displayed by the Christian captives, and a considerable amount of barbarity by their Mussulman conductors During the passage of the torrent, the Princess Baratoff observed one of the Georgian children, who had been separated from its mother, crying violently, to the great

* Hands or arms. The Russian word *rouki* means both.

annoyance of the Lesghian who had taken charge of it. The mountaineer at last took the child by the legs, dashed its brains out against a rock, and threw it towards the abyss which received the stream somewhat lower down.

As the captives proceeded on their tedious journey they came to a beautiful wood, in which the Princess Chavchavadzey found the rest of her party waiting for her, as the Chechnian had predicted. To their general delight the captives from Tsenondahl were once more all together. The Princess dismounted and found herself in the midst of those dearest to her. Here, too, she met the Georgian girl with her motherless infant, who now received another meal, after which the Princess fed her son Alexander. The little infant, the chance nursling of the Princess, was the daughter of a Georgian priest, and having lost her mother, was travelling under the care of her sister, being generally thrown across a donkey in one of those sacks which so alarmed the Princess for the fate of the children within.

The captives were assembled in a wood of pines which had all the appearance of a well-kept park. Here they formed into a number of groups, and the Princess Chavchavadzey at last ascertained what had happened to her sister since their last meeting.

The Princess Orbeliani left the tower of Pohali long after her sister. She had all the children with her except Marie, who had gone on with the Princess Baratoff. They all slept in a wood in the midst of a swamp, suffering very much from cold and damp. The children were put to lie down on cloaks, but the women had

no choice but to sleep on the marshy soil. After such a night's lodging as this, the Princess Orbeliani naturally felt feverish, and towards dawn became so ill that in attempting to reach a hole which contained snow, she was obliged to relinquish all idea of assuaging her thirst, and actually fell before she could reach the spot to which she had been directing her steps. It must be remembered, too, that from the beginning of her captivity until that time, the 7th July, she had not once partaken freely of food.

In addition to dampness, cold, and ague, a very disagreeable scene happened to the Princess during the night. Some old peasant woman of Kahetia saw with anger that she had at last obtained a horse-cloth to lie upon. The old woman was jealous of the advantage conceded to the Princess, and overwhelmed her with abuse, complaining at the same time that princes and princesses fared better everywhere than common people. At last she attempted to take the cloth by force, although it was of but little use as a protection against the swampy bed, and the Princess Orbeliani was at the time suffering much from fever and exhaustion.

At dawn, about four o'clock, the prisoners, still fatigued and trembling from cold, had to rise and proceed on their journey.

On her road to the wood of pines, where she was joined by the party of the Princess Chavchavadzey, the Princess Orbeliani experienced no remarkable adventures, if we except a rather gratifying interview with a stranger. One of the male captives, a Georgian with his hands tied, recognised the Princess who now saw him for the

first time, and in conversing with her showed that he was very familiar with everything concerning her late husband and all his family. This conversation, though of a melancholy nature, nevertheless brought back many pleasing recollections to the mind of the Princess. The stranger gave the children some *koumeli* *, which they continued to eat until they reached the wood, where a better fare awaited them.

The Princess Chavchavadzey and Prince Ivan had brought with them from the last *aoul* a lump of bread and a mutton bone, which they had succeeded in secreting in the cow-shed. The Princess Orbeliani had at last an opportunity of appeasing her hunger, and did so to some extent, as she at the same time distributed bread and meat among the women and children around her. When the meal was finished, the Princess and all who had partaken of it were still hungry, but there was nothing more to be had.

After this very scanty breakfast, the Princess enjoyed a very long rest, when they again started on their way to Shamil's house. However long a halt might last, they never continued their journey without great unwillingness, so disheartening were the difficulties they had to contend with all along their road. Nevertheless, on going away from their beautiful, shady, resting-place in the wood of pines, they were consoled by the thought that they would enjoy a good night's rest in the *aoul* of Dido, which was not far distant. They

* A preparation of flour. The people in the mountains moisten it with water, and roll it between their hands into a kind of paste, which they eat in the absence of anything better.

reached this *aoul* without much suffering themselves, but not without witnessing a great deal that was undergone by others. Halfway on the road to Dido, the Tsenondahl party, now considerably augmented, was again increased by a number of prisoners, also from Kahetia, who had been travelling by a different road.

Among the new arrivals was an Armenian priest, who was walking in the midst of his family. When the venerable old man could proceed no further, his sons and daughters held him up; but it frequently happened that the support he obtained from his devoted family was not sufficient, and he would then stop, and perhaps fall down from exhaustion. His barbarous conductors beat him most unmercifully, regarding neither his age, nor his weakness, nor his wounded condition — for he had been bleeding profusely from the leg, which was without a bandage and now much inflamed. Throughout all this ill treatment the Christian minister did not utter one complaint or one reproach, but, in accordance with his character as a preacher of the gospel, bore all his sufferings and humiliations with patience, and thus gave an example of patience and long-suffering to others. "Christ bore more than this for our sins," he said to those around; "and shall we not suffer for our own transgressions?"

The example and exhortations of the old man had a powerful effect on the other captives; and the Princesses in particular have testified to the effect it had upon themselves, in enabling them to meet the difficulties which still awaited them.

It was not until sunset that the prisoners reached Dido, without having eaten or rested since the morning. In the meanwhile the abstinence and indefatigability of the Lesghians astonished every one. They ate scarcely anything during the whole journey. Occasionally they would gather some wild flowers or grass from the meadows, and with such food as this they would satisfy themselves for several days together.

Immediately in front of the *aoul* called Dido was a lofty height, at the foot of which ran a clear, sparkling river. On the banks of this stream the captives were met by some of the women of the place, who crowded like savages round the Princess Baratoff, to examine her Georgian costume, and pressed upon her so eagerly that she would have fallen into the river, but for her conductor, who drove them away.

The captives were badly received at Dido. A crowd collected from all parts, assailed them with sticks and stones; and none of the inhabitants would consent to receive them into their houses.

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At last, however, the captives found shelter in this inhospitable *aoul*. The hut to which they were admitted was an excellent specimen of mountain architecture. In the courtyard was a hill, which it was necessary to ascend in order to get to the second floor of the house. From the second floor a steep, narrow staircase, with a trap-door at the top, led to a flat roof, half of which was covered, while the other half was quite open. In the covered compartment the female prisoners were placed, close to the family beehive. The open portion of the roof was allotted to the men.

Soon after the arrival of the captives, a Moulla * entered and told them that he had once been a prisoner in Russia, and that he had been exchanged for the Princess Orbeliani's husband. This circumstance, as the Moulla assured them, had inspired him with feelings of gratitude towards the Orbeliani family, and he had accordingly solicited Shamil's permission to conduct the prisoners to Dargi-Vedenno, and had at once obtained it.

The position of the captives beneath the curtains in the pure open air would have been highly favourable to their repose, had it not been for the bees, which flew

* Elder of a village.

out of the hives, and caused them considerable annoyance. The children, above all, were much frightened, and not without reason, for several of them were stung severely. For some time sleep was out of the question, and the elder captives were fully occupied consóling the younger, and defending them from the the bees, which attacked them perpetually. There was another circumstance which had a great effect upon the captives, and especially upon the Princess Chavchavadzey. The children, who could not go to sleep, were constantly turning to the latter, and asking her such questions, as, "Why are we here?" and "Why is papa not with us?" and "Where is Lydinka?"* and so forth.

This infantine prattle went to the mother's heart, and, while it recalled to her all the details of her past sufferings, at the same time kept her in a state of incessant agitation respecting the fate of her husband and child—for she had not yet ascertained positively that the latter was no more. The mental sufferings of the Princess were so great on this occasion that her usual energy quite deserted her, and she became gloomy and despondent. As a proof of her extreme dejection, it may be mentioned that she was almost unconscious of what was taking place around her, and that afterwards she was utterly unable to remember what occurred in the *aoul* of Dido. The account of the adventures which befell the captives while passing the night on the roof of the hut, and subsequently when they recommenced their journey to Dargi-Vedenno, was communicated by the Princess Orbeliani,—her sister, whose memory was most

* Diminutive of Lydia.

exact as regarded all the other incidents of the captivity, having failed to remember a single particular.

In the midst of the Princess Chavchavadzey's distress a comforter appeared in the shape of the Moulla, who was afterwards known among the captives as "the benevolent Moulla," thanks to his constant sympathy for their fate. The old man advised them not to grieve, offered them some of the delicacies of the mountains, and, as a proof of the interest he took in them, assured them that they should not be separated again all the way to Dargi-Vedenno.

It was late when the captives went to sleep. The nexth morning, July 8th, Prince Vagnadzey, another prisoner, joined them. At mid-day they all left Dido, and Prince Chavchavadzey at last had his arms set at liberty.

A painful thing occurred just before they started. Nina, the servant who had offered to give up her clothes to the Princess Chavchavadzey, and who had assisted and consoled her in the wood the night she was attacked by ague, was left without a horse. The "benevolent Moulla" promised she should have one in less than an hour after the departure of the other captives, when, with a little haste, she would be able to catch them up. The Princesses thought there was something suspicious in this delay of an hour, but could not understand what motive the mountaineers could have for detaining a middle-aged and rather ugly woman of the lower classes, for whom it was out of the question to expect a large ransom. The Princesses begged the Moulla not to allow Nina to be separated from them; but he

was insensible to argument, and continued to assure them that Nina would soon catch them up. There was no alternative but to yield; and, with a sad foreboding, the Princesses were forced to leave their devoted servant behind them in Dido. Their presentiments proved true. Nina never rejoined them. She continued in captivity, but it is not even known in what *aoul* she remained.

The road from Dido was up a hill and along a narrow path from which the earth was constantly breaking away. This caused the Princesses considerable alarm, on account of the children. Salome, who was tied to the saddle, was riding on her horse by herself. The Lesghian saddle was too hard and too broad, and the child cried without cessation, both from fright and from pain. Her conductor, who was probably annoyed at the noise she was making, removed her from the saddle, placed her on the ground, and left her. This scene took place in the rear of the whole party, and accordingly the forsaken Salome might very easily have remained where she was left for ever. But fortunately the Princess Orbeliani saw her niece seated on the ground, and insisted, with firmness, on her being replaced on the horse. It will be remembered that the Princess Orbeliani had saved Tamara under similar circumstances the day before.

Soon afterwards little George, the Princess Orbeliani's son, was exposed to a danger of a more immediate character. The child was in the arms of his wet nurse, whose horse was ascending by a most dangerous path which gave way at every moment. Suddenly the horse

slipped and fell into a pit sixteen or seventeen feet deep. Fortunately there was a tree growing near the edge, to which the nurse clung, while she still kept the little boy in the skirt of her dress, holding up the extremity with her teeth. The horse was afterwards pulled up and found to have suffered injury.

The Princess Orbeliani had not witnessed this accident, and consequently escaped the severe shock which she would otherwise have received.

In the next *aoul* the captives were for the first time received with general kindness and hospitality by the inhabitants. Here, too, were the first beautiful women they had seen since reaching the mountains. Their costume was exceedingly picturesque, the most remarkable part of it being the head-dress, which was decorated with metal rings, coins, and other glittering ornaments. These mountain beauties were equally affable and handsome. They went out to meet the captives as they approached the *aoul*, and showed the greatest attention to George Orbeliani's wet nurse, who had fallen ill. At the same time an old man of venerable aspect came forth and informed the captives that he had been acquainted with the late Prince David Chavchavadzey, and asked whether the Princess was his daughter-in-law. Having been answered in the affirmative, he invited the captives to his own house. The party from Tsenondahl were now again united; and the hospitable old man treated them all to fresh cheese, milk, and excellent bread. Not satisfied with merely offering the prisoners this repast, he was also most earnest in his attempts to console and comfort them,

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and altogether showed much genuine sympathy. Among other things he assured the captives that they would certainly have their liberty in less than two months. He also dressed the wounds of the nurse who had suffered so much at the hill of Kontzhi.

The old man's kindness had a great effect on his accidental visitors, especially as this was the first time they had received any genuine hospitality since they had commenced their journey.

On the morning of the 9th of July the prisoners left the friendly *aoul*, and continued to ascend and descend the mountains, of which some were rocky and barren, while others were covered with wood. On the latter they frequently found avalanches which had rolled down from the summit, but were not expected to melt until the middle of July. Sometimes they had to pass over these masses of snow, into which the horses sank to their girths, while the one which bore the motherless Georgian, the sister of the Princess's little nursling, absolutely disappeared with his rider. The Georgian girl was, however, rescued. Fortunately she had started from the last *aoul* without the baby, who, after being carefully enveloped in a sack, had been honoured with a horse to herself.

The prisoners now thought it safer to walk; but each step caused considerable pain to the Princess Chavchavadzey, whose wounded foot was much inflamed. During a long and very steep descent, the Princess was unable to proceed, and had to be carried to the bottom of the slope, a considerable distance, by Prince Vagnadzey and the under-officer Patapoff. The ob-

stacles which had to be surmounted during this day's journey were very numerous; and those who know anything of the nature of the country in Chechni and Daghestan will at once understand how much the women must have suffered. It was the most fatiguing day, as regarded mere travelling, that they had yet passed; for they were now in the most mountainous district, and had been riding or walking from morning until sunset when, for the first time, they halted. After waiting for some time on the banks of a river, in the vicinity of an *aoul* where they had hoped to pass the night, they had again to continue their journey. The Princess Orbeliani was now allowed to carry her niece Tamara; but the Lesghians would not allow her to ride, so careful were they not to fatigue their horses.

The river on whose banks the party had made a temporary halt was very circuitous; and they had alternately to ford it and follow its course for a considerable period. At last they came to a lofty and almost perpendicular mountain, which they had to ascend by a spiral and, as it appeared to the travellers, interminable path. On the summit of the mountain they found an *aoul* sufficiently populous and important to possess a mosque, in front of which the Lesghians assembled. The captives were soon surrounded by a crowd of inhabitants, who distinguished themselves by their rudeness and brutality, not only pressing against them, but even pulling their clothes and turning their heads round, so as to get a full view of their faces. This disagreeable inspection might have continued for an indefinite number, had it not been for the "benevolent

Moulla," who had accompanied them all the way from Dido, and who now led them to a house in the centre of the *aoul*. This house was distinguished from all the others by a large balcony, which, as the captives perceived on the following morning, was painted a bright red.

About eighty prisoners entered, when the women were conducted into a large room without windows, but which received air and light from a door opening on to the before-mentioned balcony. In this balcony the men were placed.

The prisoners remained in their balcony and their room without windows for about a week, that is to say, until the 16th July. It will be easily believed that they had no small amount of discomfort to put up with during their stay in the "House of the Cheese," as they named their habitation, for a reason that will afterwards be explained. The balcony was at the same time the roof of a shed in which horses, asses, and oxen, were kept. Accordingly its atmosphere was infected by a suffocating stench from below, which afterwards penetrated through the door into the room occupied by the female captives. This door could not be closed without excluding all light and air from the room. Consequently it had to remain open; and the effluvium from the shed beneath the balcony was added to the other severe inconveniences inseparable from the confinement of so many persons in one apartment. By way of completing the wretchedness of their position, the mountaineers now gave them miserable food; and for some days they had nothing to eat but *hinkal*—that is to say, a kind

of paste made out of flour and water, which was equally offensive in aspect and in flavour, and which even the children could not swallow without considerable disgust. None of the female prisoners were allowed to go out; but some of the men were sent twice a day to fetch water. The impurity of the atmosphere, together with the badness of the food, the total want of exercise, and the uncleanliness which, under the circumstances, was inevitable, soon affected the health of the captives far more seriously than mere fatigue and insufficient nourishment had done. They were nearly all attacked by an illness of the nature of cholera, while the children, in addition to this, were nearly persecuted to death by vermin. The first thing necessary — among those things that were possible — was to cut all the children's hair off. But even this was no easy matter; for when asked for scissors, the mountaineers could only offer the captives large clumsy shears, such as they used for shearing their sheep.

At last some Russian money, which Prince Ivan Chavchavadzey had managed to keep concealed in the lining of his cap, was turned to account, and the prisoners obtained a supply of bread, fowls, eggs, and sour milk. These provisions were only obtained at certain intervals and in small quantities; but so marked an improvement in the diet was of course welcomed with joy whenever it *did* come. After Prince Ivan had spent his money, he succeeded in obtaining fowls and milk in exchange for the gold lace on his uniform; but soon even this resource was exhausted.

Prince Ivan's servant Simon now advanced nobly to the rescue. He had discovered a means of procuring

eatables in profusion, without either money or gold lace. He, in fact, stole them. The captives were ignorant, until some time afterwards, of the ingenious but by no means novel method adopted by Simon*, though it is not probable that he was questioned very severely as to the source from which his provisions came.

Prince Ivan had undertaken to distribute the provisions,—a most ungrateful task, as it turned out, for many of the Prince's servants, for the first time during their painful captivity, began to show signs of egotism. Famine was now producing its ordinary moral effects upon uneducated people. Complaints were made as to the smallness of the portions; and they were indeed small, though all of one size. It was impossible to increase the general stock; but in spite of this and of the Prince's strict impartiality, there were always murmurs when he gave out the food, and sometimes, in addition to murmurs, rude remarks.

Such was the captives' life in the "House of the Cheese," which owed its name to the following tragi-comic incident.

One evening an old man, the master of the house, ran into the captives' room with a naked dagger, which he brandished in all directions, exclaiming at the same time:—

"Where is my cheese? I'll kill the person who has taken it!"

The captives could just understand that a cheese had

* It must be remembered that the prisoners were without food. They may be excused for having lived at the expense of the enemy, when they must otherwise have died.

been stolen from the mountaineer, and that he was anxious to murder the thief.

Of course, among the eighty prisoners, it was possible that one might have the cheese; and accordingly the whole party were thrown into a state of great agitation, as it appeared probable that at all events one of the number would be murdered. At last, after a careful search, it became tolerably evident that the cheese was not in the room, and Prince Chavchavadzey advised the infuriated mountaineer to endeavour to find it in his own apartment.

As soon as the old man had gone away, the Princesses called upon the captives to confess if any of them had really taken the cheese, and, if so, to give it up to the old man, or introduce it secretly into his room, and not to endanger the lives of innocent persons by persisting in the denial of their guilt. But no one knew anything about it, and the prisoners were in a state of despair, expecting every moment that the ferocious old man would return and seek a victim among them. As they had anticipated, he soon made his appearance, but, to the general joy, announced that he had found his precious cheese under the staircase.

That day was also remarkable for another strange incident, which was, however, of a far less serious character.

The master of the house called for the Princesses Chavchavadzey and Orbeliani, and took them down stairs to the courtyard, where a stranger, he said, was waiting to speak to them. Here they in fact found a stranger, who stated that he was a Georgian, and had formerly been a serf on the estate of the Princess

Chelokaieff, but that he had long been a captive, and was now in the service of a Tartar merchant, whose goods he carried about and sold in the different *aouls*.

"Well, what do you want with us?" inquired the Princess Chavchavadzey.

"I heard that you were prisoners here, and thought you might be in want of money," replied the man. "Take twenty or thirty roubles from me," he added, "for your expenses on the road. You can return the money to me when you are able."

Such a proposal, from an utter stranger, affected the Princesses deeply, and disposed them strongly in his favour. They had sometimes been in such want that they had had to give up a portion of their dress in exchange for an onion, and were now so entirely without resources that they accepted the Georgian's offer with joy. The only thing they hesitated about was the means of repaying their creditor. How, when, and where were they to return him his money?

"You shall give me a receipt," said the travelling merchant; "and that will find you anywhere."

These words quite changed the intention of the Princesses as to the acceptance of the loan, and even inspired them with considerable doubts as to the purity of their compatriot's motives. Their suspicions were much strengthened by the fact that the desired receipt was to be given in the Tartar language, of which they were entirely ignorant. The form to which they were asked to affix their signatures set forth (as they were informed) that such and such a person had given a certain sum of money, on his master's account, to such

and such another person. The Princesses, however, were equally unwilling to sign a paper of which the contents were unknown to them, and to accept a service which was proffered with so much distrust. They thanked the stranger, declined his offer, and returned to their suffocating room.

A few days afterwards the captives left the "House of the Cheese," and, just as they were doing so, saw another party of prisoners, very numerous and very miserable. They were in the most pitiable condition; and nothing but groans and curses of the most blasphemous kind was to be heard as they passed.

CHAP. IX.

When the Tsenondahl party started from the "House of the Cheese," on their road to the next great *aoul*, they remarked that their conductors had been changed, and that they were now no longer Lesghians, but Chechnians, as before.

The first stage was very fatiguing; but for this they were fully compensated by the fresh air and the originality and beauty of the scenery. There was a constant improvement in each *aoul* they came to; and the river, along whose banks their course now lay, formed in many places the most beautiful cascades. At last they ascended a slope, and found themselves on a large plateau covered with a wood of pines, which reminded the Princesses of their delightful wood of Barjom.* The prisoners had just entered it when the report of firearms was heard on all sides. The Chechnians, who had just reached the frontier of their native province, had adopted this means of manifesting their joy.

There was now a general halt, during which the Chechnians pointed out to the prisoners the possessions

* Situated in the district of Goreesk, much frequented for its mineral waters, and celebrated as the favourite summer resort of the governors of the Caucasus, Golovin and Vorontsoff.

of Shamil's second son Kazi-Machmat, and the *aoul* where he usually lived.

While the captives were taking their rest, some young men, dirtily attired, and generally of unprepossessing appearance, came towards them, and examined them — especially the women — with great curiosity. These were the sons of the *Naib* who governed the district.

On leaving the wood the prisoners descended towards the banks of the river, and now, for the first time, saw gardens in full cultivation and beautiful vineyards. As they proceeded they also saw magnificent walnut trees.

In the meantime the rain was beginning to fall in sufficient quantities to make them anxious for shelter. They soon reached a small, uninhabited house, which stood on the banks of the river, and which the captives, already well soaked, lost no time in occupying. After remaining here some time, the mountaineers formed a bridge of branches, extending from the house already mentioned to a similar one on the opposite bank. The bridge was very slight, and the whole party crossed it on foot. The road on the other side was up a hill of clayey soil, which had become very slippery from the late rain. The prisoners, who were nearly all on foot, slipped, fell, or stuck fast in the clay. Prince Chavchavadzey's horse, which he had given up to the wounded nurse on leaving the "House of the Cheese," would not ascend, and threatened to throw the sick woman. But the Princess Chavchavadzey changed horses with her, — her own being quiet and accustomed to the kind of country through which they were travelling, — so that

the nurse went up the hill safely enough. Without undervaluing the Princess's generosity, it may be mentioned — in her own words — that, in riding a restive horse, she ran far less danger than one of her servants, as she had constantly both Chechnians and militiamen at her side; besides which she knew that her conductors would have to account for her life, if she happened to perish on the road, whereas one of the ordinary captives, for whom no special ransom could be demanded, might be allowed to perish without much fear of the consequences.

In the middle of the journey there was a great disturbance among the Chechnians, who suddenly drew their daggers and surrounded the prisoners. The captives were quite at a loss to account for the increase of vigilance on the part of their conductors, and many of them were very uneasy as to the motives by which the mountaineers were animated in their strange conduct. The Chechnians continued to march in close order and with their daggers drawn, until they had passed a narrow defile, when they broke into groups, and went on in their usual manner. The prisoners now ascertained the cause of the recent excitement among the Chechnians. On coming to the narrow passage, it had occurred to them that the mountaineers from the neighbouring *aouls*, having heard of the number and importance of the prisoners they were escorting, might have taken advantage of the position to form an ambush, with the view of capturing the Georgians. In case of success, the attacking party would have shared the ransom that was to be demanded for the liberation of the

captives; and the Chechnians were accordingly determined to make the most vigorous defence, and, above all, not to be taken by surprise. Either the anticipations of the Chechnians had been ill-founded, or their jealous compatriots had not had time to concert their plan of attack; for the position of the prisoners was not complicated by any fresh capture. But the fact that such an attack was considered probable is remarkable, as showing the terms on which the tribes of the Caucasus — and even families belonging to the same tribe — live together, and the little regard which is paid to the authority of Shamil in some parts of his territory.

After making a considerable circuit to avoid several high mountains, the prisoners travelled some distance through well-cultivated fields and beautiful gardens, until they reached an *aoul*. Here they were taken into a mill, where a small ill-ventilated room was placed at their disposition. In front of this room was a verandah, the floor of which was covered with straw for the captives to lie upon; but the space accorded to them was so insufficient that, both in the verandah and in the room, they were crowded almost to suffocation. Besides the serious discomfort produced by this confinement, the prisoners suffered much from hunger. After waiting long and patiently for food without receiving any, they made an attempt to get provisions from the passers-by, and succeeded in obtaining a few onions in exchange for hooks and eyes, which the women tore from their dresses. Finally the "benevolent Moulla" made his appearance, bringing with him sour milk, bread, apples, and apricots. This formed a luxurious and unexpected supper.

The night was principally remarkable for a determination formed, and announced to the rest of the captives by the under officer, Patapoff. He had discovered that it was not far from the *aoul* where they were confined to a Russian fort named Andrevskoy, and resolved to do his best to reach it. He had even succeeded in ascertaining the nearest road to the fortress, and was now only waiting for the Chechnians, already weary with their long march, to fall asleep. However, when he had fully resolved to carry out his plan, and found nothing whatever to prevent its successful execution, it suddenly occurred to Patapoff that his disappearance could not fail to increase the sufferings of the other captives, who, after his escape, would as a matter of course be guarded with the greatest severity. Accordingly he abandoned his project.

Having conferred a negative benefit on the prisoners generally, Patapoff now proceeded to confer a positive one on the wife of Andronikoff the merchant, who, as has been already mentioned, had four young children to take care of. He relieved her of half the family, tied the two children to his saddle to prevent their falling off, and tended them with the greatest care.

The scene which presented itself to the captives as they left the *aoul* was magnificent. Their road lay along the banks of a clear, sparkling river, and beneath a double row of overhanging trees, which formed a natural arcade, and preserved them from the scorching sun. But for this excellent protection their march would have been very distressing; for the heat was more intense even than in their own Georgia. The

surrounding country was both beautiful and varied; and the captives were never tired of admiring the wonderful panoramas which unfolded themselves in rapid succession to their view. One only of the number, the Princess Orbeliani, was unable to enjoy the refreshing and cheering aspect of the scenery. She had been taken ill early in the morning, and was now scarcely able to sit upon her horse.

At noon the Chechnians halted at a little house beneath the shade of the trees, and remained there three hours, during which time a large number of mountaineers arrived from the neighbouring *aouls* to see the Russian prisoners. Here occurred a very striking incident, which was at the same time highly characteristic as an illustration of mountain manners. From the midst of the crowd stepped an old woman, who threw herself fiercely upon Prince Chavchavadzey, and tried to throttle him, saying that her son was just such another young man, that he had fallen in Shamil's recent attack on Kahetia, and that she would now avenge his death by killing the first Christian she had met since the news of his loss. It is uncertain what might have been the result of this struggle between the ferocious old woman and Prince Ivan, had not Princess Orbeliani come forward and informed her that her own husband had just been killed by the Mussulmans, so that her son was already avenged. These words had the desired effect upon the old woman; she released Prince Chavchavadzey, and soon afterwards became thoroughly pacified.

From this halting-place the prisoners had suddenly to ascend a high and rocky mountain. The horses could

scarcely get a hold on the surface, and were constantly springing from one point to another in a manner which would appear incredible to those who are not acquainted with the capabilities of horses which have been bred and trained in a mountain country. In one of these leaps the Princess Chavchavadzey's horse tore off its shoe, and with it its hoof. The Princess having dismounted from the unfortunate animal's back, continued her journey on foot; but about this time the rest of the captives had to do the same, as on one side of the road there was a steep precipice, with the river gurgling beneath, while the other was covered over by a vaulted roof of rock only a few feet in height. This dangerous road, which continued for about half a mile, was to all appearance of artificial construction. It seemed to have been excavated like a tunnel in the solid rock; and without it there would have been no possibility of crossing the mountain.

Unfortunately the prisoners could form no notion of the geographical position of this wonderful pass, nor indeed of any of the many places of interest with which they became acquainted during their long and circuitous journey, and of which they frequently could not even ascertain the names. Among the various causes which render it impossible to trace the *route* by which the captives travelled, it may be mentioned that the conductors, on leaving any one *aoul*, directed their steps not towards Dargi-Vedenno, their ultimate destination, but to the first large *aoul* that happened to be at all nearer to head quarters than the one from which they were starting. This course was probably adopted with the view

of obtaining a series of resting-places for the captives*, which in the inferior *aouls* could not have been found.

The prisoners proceeded along the excavated passage, which overhung the precipice like a balcony, and was so long that it took them half an hour to reach the end. At last, however, they issued into an open plain, and were so struck with the beauty and grandeur of the surrounding scenery that for the moment they forgot their captivity and their sufferings, and contemplated the landscape with delight. They unanimously agreed that this was the most picturesque spot they had yet met with in the Caucasus, which nevertheless abounds in picturesque scenery.

Here the captives again mounted their horses, and for the lame one on which, until the accident, the Princess Chavchavadzey had been riding, was substituted a very quiet animal thoroughly accustomed to mountain roads. Having travelled for some time across a country covered with a soft soil as black as charcoal, they came to a broad river, which they had to ford. The road on the other side commenced with a low and narrow pathway between the bank and the rocks which overhung it; and in proceeding along this dangerous pass, the horse that carried the wet nurse of the Princess Orbeliani's little boy George, as well as the child himself, was suddenly brought to a halt by some projecting crags on

* It must be also remembered that prisoners and emissaries on their road to Dargi-Vedenno are always conducted there by routes so complicated that it is nearly impossible for them to know its exact position. Thus, an Armenian merchant, who was taken a few years since to Dargi-Vedenno by some of Shamil's mountaineers, was a week going there, and only twelve hours returning.

which the saddle caught. The infant, who was slung across the saddle in a sack, would have been dashed to pieces by the startled horse, had not one of the Georgian militiamen advanced promptly and removed the child from his perilous position. The wet nurse dismounted at the same time.

The Princess Orbeliani had not been a witness of the danger which had threatened her son. She was last of all in the long *cortége*, and had much difficulty in keeping up with the party at all, her illness having now made such progress that she was obliged at frequent intervals to get off her horse and take a few minutes' rest on the grass.

The road was constantly either up or downhill. One of these acclivities had to be ascended by a series of steps, which resembled a natural stone staircase. Here the wounded nurse was made to dismount, as the Chechnians were afraid her weight would fatigue the horse.

On the summit of the hill there was a halt, which, however, lasted so short a time that the foremost were again in motion before the rest of the party had completed the ascent.

Amongst other things which the more talkative of the mountaineers communicated to the Princess Chavchavadzey, was the news that in a neighbouring *aoul* an infant captive four or five months of age was to be seen. The Princess at once imagined this must be her Lydia, who by some miracle had been picked up alive from the spot where she had seen her fall. She accordingly begged the "benevolent Moulla" to send to the *aoul* in question

and ascertain all particulars respecting the child. The Moulla promised to comply with the Princess's request, but could not do so before the party arrived at the next *aoul*, where they were to spend the night in the house of some other Moulla. The *aoul* was not very far distant; and the prisoners reached it before dark. They met with no serious obstacles during the latter portion of their day's journey. They had, however, to cross a river, which flowed before the hill on which the *aoul* was built. Some of the party forded it on horseback; and the water was sufficiently deep to make it necessary for the horses to swim. The remainder crossed by means of trees which were thrown singly across the river; and these narrow bridges bent beneath the feet of the prisoners, who walked along them with the consciousness that the slightest uncertainty in their steps would precipitate them into the water.

In the *aoul* the prisoners were found to be all present, with the exception of Salome and Marie, the Princess Chavchavadzey's little girls. After expecting them some time in vain, the Princess became greatly agitated, and communicated her fears to the rest of the party. This would have led to nothing, and the children would probably have been lost for ever, had it not been for the under officer Patapoff, who on this occasion distinguished himself not only by his resolution, but also by the most remarkable courage. Having asked permission from the "benevolent Moulla" to take several conductors with him, he set off in search of the lost children, and by recent traces was enabled to come up with them. They had been stolen by the inhabitants of one of the

neighbouring *aouls*, but Patapoff soon recovered them, and himself brought them back to the *aoul* where the Princess was awaiting their appearance.

This incident had the effect of disturbing the captive's rest for the night. It was not until daybreak that Patapoff returned with the children; and during his absence the Princesses and many of the other captives were in a state of the greatest anxiety and excitement as to the result of his enterprise. If we take into consideration the number of sleepless nights passed by the captives during their journey through the mountains, and above all if we consider the causes which rendered these nights sleepless, it appears astonishing, not that both the Princesses should have been attacked by illness on several occasions, but that either of them should have reached Dargi-Vedenno alive.

However, in the morning the prisoners had to rise early and continue their journey, which was beginning to appear interminable. Before they set off, another painful circumstance occurred. Until now the prisoners had all travelled together; but the Princesses were at this time informed that they must be separated from their servants; they might choose one or two, but the others, they were told, must be left behind at the *aoul*. The Princesses were sadly perplexed as to who should be selected to accompany them on their journey. They had all been kind and faithful, and each one had had some opportunity of proving her devotion to her mistress. But it was impossible not to obey the order of the mountaineers, and at last they decided to take the wet nurses of George and Alex-

ander, and a little girl of thirteen, who certainly would have suffered more than the others had she been left behind in the midst of barbarous and cruel enemies.

The selection of the three servants above mentioned caused a great tumult among those who were to be left behind. They protested loudly against what they considered a most unjust choice, and ended their complaints with tears and screams.

After many entreaties, Princess Ivan persuaded the conductors to allow the whole of the servants to accompany them with the understanding that they should travel on foot, an arrangement which the latter much preferred to the prospect of being left alone for an indefinite period in an *aoul*, where they were sure to be infamously treated.

The journey on which they were now starting, and which was to take them to one of the largest *aouls* in the country, was perhaps the most fatiguing of all. No accidents of a serious nature happened to any of the party; but a heavy rain fell during the whole day and soaked them all to the skin. The road, too, was bad beyond description: at one time the prisoners sank to their knees in the mud, at another they had to jump over narrow but abrupt chasms with torrents roaring at the bottom. In a word, they had to go through all the inconveniences of mountain travelling in rainy weather, and it was night before they halted, for the first time, at the "Great Aoul"—so called by the captives, in order to distinguish it emphatically from all the inferior *aouls* through which they had passed.

CHAP. X.

THE "Great Aoul" was built on the summit of a lofty and rocky mountain, which could only be reached by a steep path in the form of a staircase and cut out of the solid stone. A similar stone staircase formed the approach to each house or hut in the *aoul;* and the prisoners had to ascend several of them in order to get to the habitation of the Moulla where they were to stop. Having entered the Moulla's house, the Tsenondahl captives were led up to the top floor, the mountaineers taking the precaution of locking the outer door as soon as they were all inside. In this floor, in addition to the Princesses and their party, Prince Ivan Chavchavadzey, Prince Vagnadzey and their militiamen were placed. The other captives were taken to some huts in another part of the *aoul;* and, to the great sorrow of the Princess Chavchavadzey, the minister's daughter and her little sister, whom the Princess had fed throughout the journey, were now separated from her.

The floor in the Moulla's house was divided into two tolerably good rooms. One of these was occupied by the Princesses and their family, the other by their attendants, the third by the Princes Chavchavadzey and Vagnadzey, and the fourth by the "benevolent

Moulla,' who, however, set off on the following day for Dargi-Vedenno to see Shamil.

Before setting off, the "benevolent Moulla" said they would have to remain where they were until he returned from Dargi-Vedenno; and, as he had predicted, the captives remained in the "Great Aoul" for a period of two weeks. Here their life was tranquil. They were not disturbed by annoyances of any kind, and they were therefore comparatively happy. They rested thoroughly after the fatigues of their journey, and might have regained nearly all their strength, if their food had been of somewhat better quality; but, as in the former *aouls*, it was not only insufficient, but also of the most unpleasant kind. Sometimes, for a little gold-lace from a militia uniform, they obtained milk and bread, and occasionally the inhabitants threw fruit (generally plums and apricots) on to the flat roof, to which there was a communication from the prisoners' rooms. The prisoners also succeeded, for the first time since their captivity, in obtaining a piece of soap in exchange for a bead necklace which one of the wet nurses had preserved. This acquisition was quite a treasure; and the Princesses were now able to have their children thoroughly washed, and also to free themselves from the traces which the mud and the fatigue of their journey had left upon their persons.

The prisoners spent the greater part of their days on the flat roof, watching the daily life of the *aoul*. From their place of observation they saw much that was remarkable; and among the scenes which impressed themselves upon their memory, the following especially deserved notice

as illustrative of a strange national custom among the mountaineers. Near the house where they were confined was a pit, of which the captives were for some time at a loss to divine the object, until one day they saw a young and beautiful woman brought to the edge and pushed into it, after which a cradle containing her infant child was let down to her. The Princess Chavchavadzey inquired the meaning of this strange proceeding; and it was explained to her that the woman had killed the murderer of her husband, and that for this act of vengeance she was condemned to remain in the pit three months, at the expiration of which she would be at once remarried to the first man who would accept her as his wife.

The Princesses were also informed that throughout Shamil's dominions no woman was allowed to remain a widow more than three months. At the end of that period she is obliged to find another husband, a matter about which, thanks to the spread of polygamy, there is not much difficulty, especially if the widow be young and not very ugly. The object of this law is doubtless to increase the population as much as possible in a country where it is being continually diminished by privation and an interminable war.

Soon after the unhappy woman had been placed in the pit, two of the militiamen from Kahetia were thrown into one exactly similar. The Princesses were informed that this punishment was inflicted upon them in return for their attempt to escape from the *aoul* as they were going out, on their daily errand, to fetch water. As the Moulla, or elder of the *aoul*, in whose house

the Princesses were living, had ordered this punishment, they applied to him to obtain its mitigation; and it was not long before the militiamen were released, though they were afterwards put to work in the Moulla's fields. During the absence of the "benevolent Moulla," the captives had many privations to support, and their distress was much increased by the illness of the Princess Chavchavadzey's little boy Alexander. When the "benevolent Moulla" returned, he was astonished and affected by the thinness and feebleness of the child. The old man took from his pocket a piece of thirty copeiks *, and wished to give it to the Princess Chavchavadzey, but, fearing to hurt her pride, hesitated about doing so. Not knowing how to manage, he at last slipped it into the child's hand, saying at the same time to the Princess, "Do not be offended — accept it — look at your sick child — for that money you can buy a fowl and make him some soup." All were touched by the simple but considerate kindness of the old man; he himself was moved, and several tears were seen to run down his long moustache and beard.

Five copeiks of the Moulla's money were indeed spent in the purchase of a fowl, but here another misfortune presented itself; there was nothing to boil it in, and none of the faithful would lend one of their cooking utensils to a Christian. The "benevolent Moulla" also overcame this difficulty for them. He obtained an earthen pot from one of the inhabitants, who, however, would only give it up on the distinct understanding

* About a shilling.

that it was to be washed out seven times before the Giaours returned it to him. Nor did the old man's services stop here. Having heard the captives complain of the bad quality of the bread, he brought two women to the flat roof, and ordered them to construct an oven there. The oven was soon ready, and the prisoners now began to make their own bread. After some time the Moulla again found means to perform a fresh service for them. He obtained some red leather and brought it to the captives, advising them to make themselves shoes, so that they might not appear before Shamil with naked feet.

The kind actions by which the "benevolent Moulla" distinguished himself could be ascribed neither to the influence of Shamil, nor to any other source except the generosity and goodness of the old Mussulman's own heart; and they were appreciated so much the more highly by the grateful captives.

The manufacture of shoes was an art with which the Princesses were naturally not acquainted, and which puzzled them dreadfully. Prince Ivan Chavchavadzey cut out the shape; but the difficult part of the process still remained to be done, namely, the sewing. This it was difficult to accomplish without such necessary articles as needles, thread, and so forth. But the permission of the "benevolent Moulla" having been obtained, the Princess Baratoff set off to the residence of a Chechnian lady who was well known as the principal cobbler in the *aoul*. On her return the Princess announced that she had found every imaginable requisite for the pursuance of the cobbling trade, and that the lady's establishment

was, moreover, well furnished in an ordinary domestic point of view — many of the articles, and nearly the whole of the plates and dishes, having been taken from Tsenondahl. The mistress of the house was richly attired; and altogether the Princess Baratoff came away with the impression that it was no bad thing to be a cobbler in Chechni. Having received some very necessary instruction in her art from the lady who professed it, the Princess Nina was able to set to work directly she arrived at the Moulla's house; and her example was speedily followed by the other captives.

In the meantime the news arrived that Shamil had returned to Dargi-Vedenno from his expedition. The captives could now start for the Iman's head quarters, and the "benevolent Moulla" announced to them that on the following morning they would commence the last stage of their journey. The militiamen who had attempted to escape had now completed their labours in the Moulla's fields; and by way of testifying his satisfaction at the manner in which they had performed their work, and at the same time of honouring the captives who had lived in his house, he caused an ox to be roasted. The dinner was magnificent; and there was so much left that the prisoners were able to take with them a tolerably large supply of provisions for the road.

From the Great Aoul the whole party, without exception, set off on good horses. The road lay through very beautiful gardens; and every minute the country became more and more picturesque. At one moment the captives came in sight of a beautiful river which ran playfully between the lofty heights on each side; at

another they found themselves opposite a mountain covered from the summit to the base with beautiful verdure and magnificent flowers, such as the Princesses had never beheld even in hothouses. Herds of cattle not very large, but of great beauty, were grazing around them. *Aoul* succeeded *aoul*, none of which were built in valleys, but all on the summit of some rocky elevation, — a circumstance which caused one of the Princesses' servants to remark that "if the mountaineers were not devils, they would not be able to live in such places, but would fall down and break their necks."

The first stage of the day's journey was rather a long one. The halt was made in an open plain where there was no protection from the rays of the sun, which was now scorchingly hot. The Princesses were very anxious to find some place of shelter; and the "benevolent Moulla," ever ready to gratify them, conducted them to the banks of a neighbouring river. The bank was steep, and about nine feet in height; but the old man lost no time in jumping from it on to a large stone below, and helping the Princesses to follow him. From this stone the Princesses perceived the entrance to a large excavation in the form of a grotto. In this cool shelter the captives rested for a considerable time, enjoying a magnificent view on the opposite bank of the river, which was very mountainous and covered with gardens and *aouls*. Near the grotto there was a profusion of beautiful flowers, from which the Princesses gathered nosegays for the children.

Either the prospect of a speedy termination to their fatiguing journey, or the lengthened repose in the cool

grotto, or the contemplation of the beautiful scenery, or perhaps all these causes together, had the effect of alleviating the distress of the Princesses to a considerable extent; and they were now suffering far less both in mind and in body than at any previous period of their captivity. Their despair had now given way to a feeling of submission to the Divine will. They looked towards the future with fear but not without hope; and although they knew that in Shamil's hands they would be at the mercy of a ferocious enemy, they were at the same time convinced that he was neither unreasonable nor devoid of human sympathy.

As far as the Princess Chavchavadzey alone was concerned, her cheerfulness might be explained by the fact that she had found her little nursling again (who, with her sister the minister's daughter, had been separated from her during the sojourn of the party in the last *aoul*), and by the hope she still entertained of finding her little Lydia as soon as she reached Dargi-Vedenno.

Such were the thoughts and feelings which animated the captives towards the conclusion of their journey; for they were now not more than a day's march from Shamil's residence. After their long and satisfactory rest in the grotto, the Princesses joined the other captives, and the whole party set off along a smooth even road which was frequently intersected by small shallow streams. At length they reached a narrow passage formed by the proximity of two enormous mountains which were covered entirely with verdure. On the summit of one of these mountains grew a

gigantic tree, which, springing from an unattainable height, rose majestically into the air far above all surrounding objects.

Down the middle of the narrow passage flowed a river or, to speak more correctly, a stream, above which the mountains grew gradually closer together until at last they met and formed a kind of corridor, beneath which the prisoners had to ride for about half an hour.

Having passed through this narrow passage, they debouched on to a large open plain covered with thick grass; and beyond this they saw the celebrated *aoul* of Andi. Before reaching this *aoul*, the captives met several women who were going to fetch water, with large tin jugs balanced on their heads or slung behind their backs. The Princesses remembered the dress of those women, and afterwards found out that they were the wives of some of the Naibs residing in Andi. They wore chemises and trousers of coarse linen, and from their heads to their heels hung veils of thick white calico. Their faces were moreover covered with pieces of white linen, from which the threads had been drawn out in the portions immediately before the eyes. From such coarse costumes it was impossible to imagine that those women were the wives of Naibs, and above all of Naibs residing in so important a place as Andi, the principal *aoul* in the Caucasus, and the head quarters of the aristocracy * of Chechni and Daghestan. But

* By this word we must here understand the natural superiority of riches and personal merit. There is no aristocratic class among the Chechnians, Lesghians, and the other inhabitants of the eastern side of

even the richest of the mountaineers have now to live with the greatest simplicity; such is the ruin caused among them by perpetual war.

The prisoners did not reach Andi until the evening, when they were all placed together in a kind of barn, which was not nearly large enough for their accommodation. In order to remedy this inconvenience, they were allowed to go on to the flat roof of the hut. Here they were supplied with a supper of the simplest kind which was brought to them by the wives of the Naibs. These ladies were much pleased with the appetites of the Princesses, but were afterwards very indignant when they saw the remains of the repast offered to the servants.

"We brought the supper for the Princesses," they exclaimed, "and not for their slaves."

The captives remained for some time on the roof, admiring the beauty of the night and the aspect of the *aoul* lighted up by the moon. One of the militiamen began to touch the strings of a *choongoora* *, and the prisoners listened with a melancholy pleasure as he executed several of the national airs of Georgia. No one could tell how the instrument had been saved; but every one was thankful for its preservation, and it appeared to have almost equal charms for the prisoners and for the women of Andi, who collected in crowds round the hut to hear the music of the captive *choongoora*-player.

At the conclusion of the concert the prisoners retired

the Caucasian chain, although the contrary is the case with the tribes of the western side, and those on the shores of the Black Sea.

* One of the national instruments of Georgia; a kind of guitar, with metal strings.

for the night. The "benevolent Moulla" with the officers and the militiamen remained on the roof, while the Princesses and their servants went into the room and locked the door. But again the Princesses were unable to enjoy a complete night's rest, and were prevented from falling asleep until the morning by the following incident.

When the women had all lain down and some of them gone to sleep, the door, which they fancied they had locked on retiring to rest, opened with a slight noise; the moonlight penetrated into the dark room, and enabled them to see a dark figure standing near the entrance. The Princess Chavchavadzey was the first to notice this unwelcome apparition. She addressed the intruder, and, receiving no answer, uttered a scream which awakened every one in the room. All the women rose, upon which the uninvited visitor disappeared; but he returned before long, and was caught as he was retreating to the door, and accused of an intention to rob the captives during their sleep. The disturbance soon brought the "benevolent Moulla" to the door; and at the request of the frightened servants and enraged militiamen, the thieving mountaineer was ordered to be flogged outside the hut. These incidents occupied nearly all the night; and it was dawn before the captives could get to sleep.

The "benevolent Moulla" came to the Princesses in the morning with three veils of dark silk, which he recommended them to wear, assuring them that it was considered unbecoming for women of their station to travel with their faces uncovered, and that the country through

which their road now lay was so populous, that it would be disagreeable for them not to comply with the national customs. They had not proceeded far when they saw Dargo, Shamil's former residence, which was destroyed by the Russians in 1845 under Prince Vorontsoff in person, and which was now nothing but a heap of ruins. Soon afterwards the "benevolent Moulla" brought the captives a letter from Prince Georgadzey (one of the Princesses' relatives), forwarded, they knew not how, from Temir-Han-Shouri. The letter was written in Georgian, and contained the first news they had received from Kahetia. Prince Georgadzey inquired whether the Princesses were all three living, and if so, whether they were in good health, begged them to communicate with him at once, and inform him what they most required, and advised them to lose no time in obtaining a direct permission from Shamil to correspond with their relatives. After they had read the letter, the captives had to give it up to the "benevolent Moulla," who thought it best to show the communication to Shamil, without even informing him that the Princesses had already seen it. The good old man was aware that there had been an order issued by Shamil, to the effect that the prisoners should engage in no correspondence; but in the goodness of his heart he could not refrain from breaking it, and he was now only afraid that he might have to answer for his transgression. However, the captives consoled him with an assurance that they would under no circumstances divulge the secret.

The prisoners were now close to Dargi-Vedenno; and as the Princesses rode on with their veils over their

faces, they could not help thinking that it was not for the sake of propriety alone, but rather with a view to destroy all possibility of their remembering and describing the approaches to Shamil's stronghold, that they had been supplied with the pieces of thick black silk, and recommended in so urgent a manner to wear them.

This precaution on the part of Shamil's officers, of course, had the effect of stimulating their curiosity; and in spite of the thickness of the silk, they were able to see plainly enough the objects that surrounded them, the only difference being that, viewed through the black, everything appeared of the same hue. However, they saw nothing very worthy of remark, and have no particular recollection of anything beyond several rivers and rivulets which they had to ford, and afterwards a very thick wood, traversed by a great number of very narrow paths.

An episode here occurred, of which Madame Drancey was the heroine. The French lady had just asked for something to drink; and the "benevolent Moulla" brought her some water in a leather bag, shaped like a tobacco pouch, with a silk cord to hold it by. The Moulla, who was on horseback, held the pouch by the cord, and presented it to Madame Drancey, who, however, objected to the dirtiness of the Moulla's hands, and, as he was putting it to her lips, grasped it tightly in her own, thus forcing all the water out, and drenching herself from head to foot. The result of this ill-timed fastidiousness threw the whole party into convulsions of laughter, with the exception, however, of the Moulla, who was offended, and Madame Drancey herself, who was much confused and

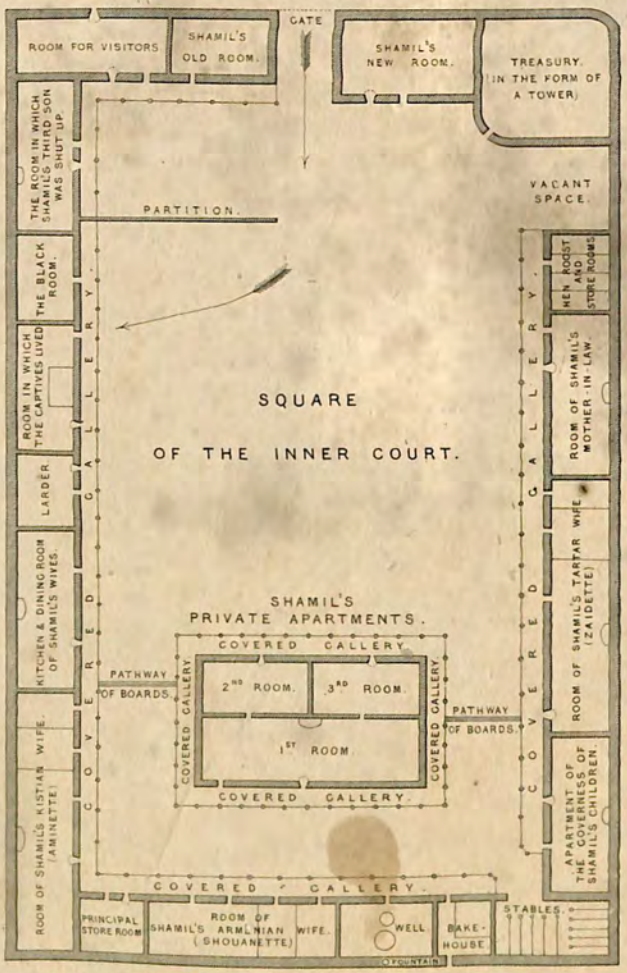
thoroughly wet. The worst of it was, that there was now no possibility of changing and drying her clothes; and she was the more mortified from the reflection, that in this state she would have to appear before Shamil. To her consolation, however, it was not long before all her travelling companions were in the same state as herself; for a thunder storm soon afterwards burst forth, and the whole party were soaked to the skin, in spite of the "benevolent Moulla," who made the greatest efforts to protect them, covering one with a cloak, another with a sheep-skin, a third with a carpet, and so on.

Through this heavy shower the prisoners were advancing nearer and nearer to Dargi-Vedenno; and as twilight came on about this time, it was impossible for the captives to see anything of the immediate environs of Shamil's celebrated *aoul*. First they met with a row of palings, which probably formed part of a cattle-shed, then a ditch, then a rampart with gates like those of the Cossack intrenched camps in the Caucasian provinces, until at length they saw the roofs of the *aoul* itself.

Close to the gates the prisoners met a number of horsemen bearing lances adorned with small flags, in front of whom rode a boy of fourteen. This was Shamil's youngest son, by a wife who had died some months previously. His name, the Princesses were informed, was Machmat-Shabi; and in spite of the rain, which was still falling in torrents, they could not help admiring his wonderful beauty. Then, without being stopped at the gates, they rode straight into the *aoul*, and were put into a barn, where they were joined by all the other

prisoners. The whole of the Tsenondahl party were soon afterwards invited to proceed to Shamil's own house. Prince Ivan, who was, on foot, leading the Princess Chavchavadzey's horse, preceded the rest of the captives; but no sooner had he reached the entrance to the house, than two Chechnians rushed forward and seized the bridle, while another took hold of Prince Ivan, and prevented him from advancing a step further.

The Princess Chavchavadzey saw her relative turn deadly pale. He was deeply pained for the fate of the Princess, who from that moment seemed destined to remain alone, and without any sort of protection, in the hands of her enemies. They separated with sad forebodings. The Princess rode on through the outer courtyard, and, on looking round and seeing that she was followed only by the Princess Baratoff and little Tamara, suffered more than ever from the same dreadful presentiment which had lately had so visible an effect on Prince Ivan. But there was no help for it; and the two Princesses proceeded with the little girl into the inner courtyard, that is to say, into Shamil's seraglio. This was the evening of Friday, July 30th.



PLAN OF SHAMIL'S SERAGLIO OR INNER COURT, IN THE AOUL OF DARGI-VEDENNO.

SKETCHED FROM OBSERVATION BY THE PRINCESS ANNA CHAVCHAVADZEY, IN THE YEAR 1855.

Smith, Elder & Co. Lith. Cornhill, London.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

THAT the Princess Chavchavadzey should have been terribly agitated on entering Shamil's seraglio* was natural enough; but her fears were, nevertheless, not justified by anything that followed. In the outer court-yard she had found a large crowd collected, and in one of the balconies perceived a solitary figure of lofty stature, dressed entirely in white. This, as she afterwards ascertained, was Shamil himself; but in the darkness and confusion she was unable to distinguish the persons who surrounded her.

If the reader will take the trouble to look at the accompanying plan of Shamil's seraglio, he will see two arrows, one straight and the other crooked. The former marks the entrance through the gates as far as a partition which re-incloses a portion of the seraglio; the latter points out the way to the apartment occupied by

* It is as well to remind the reader that the *seraglio* is a very different thing from the harem. The *seraglio*, or inner court, is merely that part of the Mussulman's house in which the family reside. It is in the outer court alone that strangers are received, or affairs transacted.

the Princesses. In front of this apartment was a gallery, which extended all round the quadrangle.

The Princesses were invited by the women to dismount from their weary horses, and were then conducted to the dismal apartment in which they were destined to remain confined during the next seven months.

Some of the women, who were evidently servants, followed them into the room, took their shoes off, and helped them to undress. At this moment the Princess Orbeliani entered the apartment, and was instantly surrounded by the inmates of the seraglio, among whom the captives could not help noticing a girl of thirteen, of fair complexion, with a face of much expression, and eyes half closed. This was Napicette, Shamil's daughter; and if the Princesses had seen Shamil distinctly, they would have had no trouble in recognising her at once, if only by those hazel half-closed eyes which form the distinguishing feature of the Mountain Chief and all his family.* After some time two women entered the room, dressed in long white chemises over white trousers. These were two of Shamil's wives. One of them, a short, thin, pock-marked woman, with a crooked aquiline nose, hazel eyes, and a sly, malicious smile upon her thin lips, was named Zaidette, and appeared to be not more than twenty-four years of age. She was certainly not handsome; but she was full of expression, and at the same time so graceful in all her movements, that it was easy to recognise in her the native of the Caucasus. The captives soon ascertained that she was of Tartar

* *Vide* the frontispiece.

origin, her father being Shamil's tutor, Djemmal Eddin, a man who exercised enormous influence over the Mountain Chief and all his people, and whose voice was all-powerful in the general councils.

The other, named Shouanette, was an Armenian, born in Mosdok, and already favourably known to the captives by the stories of her kindness which they had heard on the road. She was rather more than thirty years of age, tall, stout, decidedly pretty, with a very fair fresh complexion, and a simple but exceedingly kind expression of countenance. From the first moment, the Princess felt disposed to place confidence in her, and addressed several questions to her through an interpreter. Amongst other things, they asked whether the children were to be brought to them, to which Shouanette replied, also through the interpreter, that all their party would join them soon, but that for the present Shamil had thought it best to give the Princesses time to recover from the fatigues of their journey, after which they would have the children constantly with them, and would be allowed to select whichever of their servants they wished to retain in their apartment.

Before long the two wet nurses arrived with the little Princes Alexander and George, after whom came Salome with Vassilissa, and Madame Drancey with Marie.

They had all, as a matter of course, to sit down upon the floor, and were instantly surrounded by a number of inquisitive women and children. The latter were attired in coarse dark-blue chemises; the former, in addition to the ordinary costume, wore head-dresses in the Georgian style, but made of coarse linen instead of thin

gauze. Among the number of persons who were examining them with so much curiosity, the Princess noticed one young woman of elegant appearance, and apparently about seventeen years of age. She was dressed in a figured cotton tunic, a dark-blue chemise, and wide red trousers, while instead of a veil she wore a large black silk handkerchief. Her face was brilliantly fair, and her nose small, thin, and somewhat *retroussé*. Her mouth was rather large, but her teeth were dazzlingly white, and her gums of the brightest pink. All this formed a very attractive *ensemble*, which was, moreover, lighted up by a pair of fine large grey eyes, expressive of gaiety, amiability, and warm-heartedness. This was Aminette, a native of Kistee, and Shamil's third wife.

The different impressions produced upon the Princesses by the very characteristic physiognomies of Shamil's three wives, were so far correct that they were only strengthened by all the incidents which occurred during their seven months' residence in the seraglio. Upon the good and bad points in the dispositions of the wives, the entire happiness of the captives during this period may be said to have depended, it being certain that for all their pleasures, and in an equal degree for all their annoyances, they were indebted to one or the other of those ladies.

The Princesses understood this from the first, and, with the usual penetration of their sex, set to work discovering the particular qualities and defects by which each of the three wives was distinguished. This was not difficult; but it may be repeated once for all, that

the Princesses found their first impressions fully realised in the sequel.

In a little while the two eldest of the wives went out, and returned with various refreshments, such as tea, honey, cheese, white bread, and, to the great astonishment of the captives, delicious sweetmeats such as can only be procured at one place in the Caucasus, namely, the shop of Tollet, the French confectioner, at Tiflis. The children were delighted with the refreshments, especially with the tea. Little Tamara began to dance about, and at last became so playful that it was only with the greatest difficulty she could be put to sleep. In the meantime evening had become night, and one after another the Princesses' visitors were beginning to disappear, until at last the mistresses of the house left them alone.

As she wished them good night, the Princess Chavchavadzey turned to Shouanette, the Armenian wife, with a request that she would institute a search for little Lydia, whom she still hoped to find; but Shouanette told her, laconically, to speak to the eldest.

The Princesses, who had hitherto considered Shouanette the eldest wife, which she in fact was, as regarded years, suddenly discovered that precedence was taken by Zaidette, who was of higher descent than either of the others; but it was not until some time afterwards that the captives learned what the rules were on this subject, and in what relation each of them stood to Shamil.

The captives now began to prepare for their night's rest, but before lying down they made an inspection of the room. Measuring it with one of their shoes, they

found that it was twenty-six (shoes) long, and twelve broad. A large portion of the apartment was occupied by a fireplace; and the outer air was only admitted through a door and one solitary window, somewhat less than a quarter of a yard square. There was no furniture; but the floor was covered with white felt and pieces of carpet of native manufacture. On shelves which projected from the wall, about seven or eight feet from the ground, were three mattresses, two quilts, and two pillows stuffed with wool and flax. The bedding, like the room itself, had need of ventilation.

When the children had fallen asleep, and the grown-up persons were preparing to follow their example, Zaidette, Shamil's eldest wife, entered, accompanied by Hadjio the steward, a man of fifty, with a kind but rather simple physiognomy. He was carrying a loaf of sugar, a tea-caddy containing tumblers*, and everything requisite for making tea. Hadjio had also a letter for the Princesses, from which it appeared that these presents came from Nina Eristoff (General Melikoff's sister), at Zakatal. The captives were delighted to receive news from home, but were rather startled by the commencement of the letter, which congratulated them on being at Dargi-Vedenno. As they continued to read, they found that their correspondent rejoiced at Dargi-Vedenno having been selected as their place of imprisonment, because there were other more distant and far less accessible *aouls* where they might possibly have been confined; besides which, at Dargi-Vedenno

* In Russia tea is frequently drunk out of tumblers, and travelling tea-caddies always contain a certain number of glasses.

they had the advantage of being under the protection of Shamil himself. The letter ended with a warm expression of regret, from General Melikoff, at their present disastrous position.

Hadjio explained to them, before he went away, that for once they had been allowed to receive a letter in the Georgian language, but that in future they must correspond with their friends in Russian, as Shamil, who intended to read all their communications, had no Georgian interpreter. The Princesses were then left to themselves for the night.

The next morning, at about nine o'clock, breakfast was brought in. It consisted of cheese made from sheep's milk, butter, onions, boiled mutton, and white bread, the upper crust of which was covered with a thick layer of grease. This, it appeared, was the custom in the Caucasus; but it was a custom to which the prisoners were unable to habituate themselves, and throughout their captivity they had to cut off the upper crust, soak the remainder of the loaf in water, and then dry it and hang it up until the greasy smell had to a great extent disappeared.

In the course of the morning several of the other prisoners were allowed to visit the captives in the seraglio; and among them were the minister's daughter with her little sister, whom the Princess Chavchavadzey had fed throughout the journey. The young girl had been anxious to see her protector, in order to procure a wet nurse for the infant, as the Princess herself was no longer permitted to feed it: she had been informed, in reply to her request for permission to do so, that the child

was not hers, and that she had nothing to do with it. She now wished to ascertain whether there was no woman about the place who could nurse the child, and was for some time at a loss whom to consult on the subject. At last she determined to take into her confidence a Tartar woman named Han-Aga, a short, stout, and, as was afterwards proved, very kind person, the wife of Labazan, who was head watchman of the seraglio, and travelling cook to Shamil. This woman having been made to understand the Princess's wish, ran to communicate it to Shamil's wives; and a nurse was at length procured for the little girl in whom the captives took so much interest.

In the evening, Hadjio the steward announced to the Princesses that Shamil was about to pay them a visit, in order to have some important conversation with them. Soon afterwards the illustrious mountaineer appeared, but did not cross the threshold of their room. He remained throughout his visit in the balcony, close to the open door, where he was provided with a wooden stool to sit upon. By his side, and also outside the door, stood Hadjio the steward, and Indris* the Russian interpreter.

The captives remained in the room; and the conversation took place through the door and by means of the interpreter.

Shamil began by inquiring after their health.

"We are tired, owing to our journey, but otherwise quite well, thank heaven," replied the captives.

"I am astonished myself at your having all arrived

* Probably a corruption of the Russian Andrei, or Andrew. "Indris" was a Russian deserter.

in safety, and I can see in that a promise that God will now grant me the wish I have so long cherished, that of redeeming my son who is with the Russians. I have now come to assure you that you need feel no alarm about remaining here; no one will harm or annoy you, and you will be treated like the members of my own family, but only on one condition—that you attend strictly to my injunction not to write or receive letters without my permission. If you attempt to carry on any secret correspondence with your relations, or if they offend in a similar manner on their side, then I will spare neither yourselves nor your children, I will kill you all as I killed ten Russian officers who were prisoners here and received a letter baked in a loaf. Their ingenuity was discovered, and I ordered them to have their heads cut off. Remember, too, the young Russian countess at Stavropol, who was on the point of being married when she was taken prisoner by my men. That girl could have been ransomed long ago; but I would listen to none of her relatives' offers, because she presumed to set me at defiance. The same thing might happen to you; therefore take care what you do."

Shamil having concluded this long speech, paused for a reply.

The Princess Chavchavadzey was so enraged at Shamil's menaces that she resolved not to say a word; but her sister, who was less excited, went to the door, and addressed him in the following terms:—

"You need not threaten us. We have no intention of disobeying you. Our position and our education alike forbid us to have recourse to falsehood; and you

may have entire confidence in our promises. As for any letters which may be addressed to us, of course we cannot be answerable for their contents."

"Very well," returned the Iman; "but do not forget that you are in Shamil's power."

This finished the interview. Shamil rose, disappeared, and was followed by Hadjio and the interpreter; after which the captives breathed freely.

Soon after Shamil's departure the prisoners who had come to visit the Princesses, and who had been present during their interview with the Iman, were taken away. Some time afterwards the two eldest wives appeared, and promised, in accordance with a wish expressed by the Princesses, to endeavour to place all their servants with them in the same room. In default of this precaution the Princesses feared some of the number might be taken away to distant *aouls*, and perhaps lost sight of altogether.

The next morning at breakfast time Shamil's daughters entered the room. Napicette, the eldest, was the girl of thirteen whom the Princesses had seen as they were passing through the court-yard on the first day of their arrival. Patimatte, the second, was about ten years of age, and very like Napicette. These girls were sisters, not only by the father's side, but also through the mother (who was dead), to Djemmal-Eddin, Kazi-Machmat, and Machmat-Shabi. The youngest, Najabat*, was about six years old. She was the daughter of Zaidette, and surpassed her elder sisters in beauty, though her figure was bent quite on one side—a defect

* The Russian *j* is soft, as in French (*je, jambon*, &c.).

which did not prevent her from climbing up the palings and roof of the house with all the agility of a cat. The children were not long forming an acquaintance with those of the Princesses, and—like children—they all set off together to play in the yard.

The whole day was passed in introductions; and the Princesses were thus made acquainted with all the inhabitants of the seraglio. These were as follows:—

In addition to the persons already mentioned, there was, first of all, Zaidette's step-mother, Bachtoum the wife of Shamil's tutor Djemmal Eddin, after whom the Iman's eldest son had been named. She was not more than thirty-five years of age, and remarkably beautiful.

Her daughter, named Baba, a girl of seventeen, was of an amiable disposition, and took much pleasure in learning Georgian from the Princesses. This afterwards enabled her to give them a great deal of news, which was generally interesting, if not always true. She was exceedingly pretty, but unfortunately had a blemish in one of her eyes.

In a separate compartment of the seraglio, together with the eldest daughters, lived Bahoo, the mother of Shamil's deceased wife, and consequently the grandmother of all his children except the youngest. She was old, but far from feeble, and was in the habit of kneading the bread for all the family. She appeared to be rather a good-natured woman, but did not distinguish herself one way or the other as long as the Princesses were in the seraglio.

Nana, a native of Kistee, and the mother of Shamil's third and prettiest wife, Aminette, was another of the

inmates. She was no longer young, and devoted most of her time to cooking. The remainder of the household consisted of —

Hadji Rebil, a middle-aged and malicious Tartar woman, who acted as governess to Shamil's daughters;

Zainab, the wife of Younouss, one of the officers attached to Shamil's person, of middle age, with an open, benevolent expression of countenance, and a constant smile on her lips;

Ilita, the wife of Hadjio the steward, a woman who kept her husband constantly under her thumb.*

In that portion of the seraglio which was devoted to the men and boys the inmates were —

Machmat-Shabi, a boy of fourteen, Shamil's third son, extremely handsome, and equally lively and mischievous;

Selim, a young man, who having in his childhood been made prisoner on the banks of the Alazan, was at present a member of the body-guard, and arms-bearer to Shamil, to whom he was devoted. He was an intelligent and brave man; and Shamil, wishing to strengthen his attachment as much as possible, had married him to a member of his household named Tamara, herself a captive, much older than Selim, and desperately fond of him. This woman was to Shamil an excellent guarantee of her husband's fidelity, as, for fear of losing him she would be sure to inform the Iman the moment she suspected Selim of the slightest intention to escape. However, Selim had hitherto made

* In the original, the expression is still more forcible. The exact words are, "under her shoe."

no attempt to free himself from his long captivity, nor was it likely that he would leave his numerous children, whom he loved sincerely.

Finally, there were Labazan and Bey-Mourza. The former, as we have said, was Shamil's travelling cook (a post which confers no small honour and distinction) and the husband of the amiable Han-Aga, already introduced. The latter was one of Shamil's most devoted servants. They were both well-disposed persons.

Of course, during the first few days of their residence in Shamil's house, the captives had not time to make the acquaintance of all the persons above named, nor did these constitute the whole of the inmates of the seraglio. There were many others of secondary importance, among whom we must mention, in particular, a number of girls, captives as well as natives, not more than sixteen years of age. These girls remain with Shamil's family until the age of sixteen, when they are given in marriage to those Murids whom Shamil wishes to honour by some especial mark of favour.

All those persons, however, who play a prominent part in the incidents about to be related have been already named. The same system which has been pursued with regard to the principal characters may be applied to the scene of action, although the captives of course knew little about the position and construction of the seraglio until after they had lived in it a considerable period.

Shamil's seraglio, or inner court, consists of a large oblong quadrangle, about seventy-five paces long and fifty broad, with a gallery or balcony running all round

the interior. A small portion of this quadrangle, near the gates, and immediately beneath the window of a room in which strangers are sometimes received, is cut off from the principal square by a paling which extends in a straight line nearly halfway across the seraglio. Quite at the other extremity, with a space of about twelve paces between either side and the wall, stands a detached two-storied building, surrounded by a covered gallery. In this building are Shamil's own apartments, communicating with the rest of the seraglio by two lines of planks laid along the ground. One line of boards leads straight to the room of Aminette, the youngest wife, the other to that of Zaidette, the Tartar woman. At the top of the building is a kind of loft to hang meat in.

The square of the inner court, that is to say, the principal part of the seraglio, extending from the paling near the entrance to the detached building, measures about fifty paces either way.

Shamil's private apartments consist of only three rooms, in which he may be said to pass the whole of his domestic life, while the political or business portion of his existence is confined to his "old private room" on the right of the gates. Here the Iman receives visitors, grants audiences, administers justice, and issues orders in connection with all kinds of civil and military affairs.

The new cabinet on the left of the gates adjoins Shamil's treasury, a semicircular, two-storied building.

Next to the "old private room" is a large room kept especially for Naibs coming to visit the Iman. In this

apartment there are two windows, one looking towards the inner, the other towards the outer court. From the latter Shamil was in the habit of addressing the people when he had anything important to communicate to them; and it was for the purpose of intercepting the view from the former that the paling we have already mentioned had been erected. This partition was called by the captives "the wall of jealousy," and with some foundation.

The other rooms are all indicated and described in the plan of the seraglio, which was sketched from memory by the Princess Chavchavadzey. We must add that each chamber has but one window and one door, both of which open on to the gallery; so that there is no direct communication between any two apartments in the seraglio. It is only in the portion occupied by Shamil and his wives that the windows are provided with panes, which even then are exceedingly small. Each room has a grate, and all the buildings are of wood.

CHAP. II.

On the morning after Shamil's visit, that is to say, on the third since the arrival of the captives at Dargi-Vedenno, the two eldest wives came in and told the Princesses that messengers had been despatched to all parts of the Iman's dominions in search of the Princess Chavchavadzey's little girl. Shamil had moreover ordered that all children in arms without mothers should be brought to his residence, and had at the same time sent for Nina, the nurse whom the captives had left with so much regret at one of the *aouls* on the road.

The Princesses expressed their gratitude for Shamil's kindness, upon which the wives informed them that they were to have their servants with them in the same room, and concluded by saying that Shamil would like to receive a visit from the children of his captives.

The children were taken to him, and returned in great glee, laden with fruit and sweetmeats. The Iman's wives, who had accompanied the children, related that their lord, finding little Alexander in a very sickly state, had proposed to have him examined and treated by a woman who practised medicine, if the Princess would consent to it. The Princess accepted Shamil's offer; and the next day the wife of a common moun-

taineer arrived, looked at the little boy, spread some thick ointment upon a piece of rag, and applied it to his stomach. Then she ordered a sheep to be slaughtered, and had the child wrapped up in the hot skin for the night. On going away she left directions to have this course of treatment repeated daily, and the child soon began slowly but steadily to recover. Unluckily, about this time he commenced cutting his teeth, and the appearance of each tooth was accompanied by such violent fits that the Princesses sometimes feared they would terminate fatally.

Shamil himself superintended the treatment, and had the child brought to him daily. The Princesses were convinced that this conduct had its origin in the kindest and most disinterested motives; but it was also possible that Shamil might be influenced by a desire to preserve the son of Prince Chavchavadzey in order to be more certain of obtaining his own in exchange. Moreover Shamil was determined to obtain as large a sum as possible for the freedom of his prisoners, and might be afraid of losing one of the most valuable. This last supposition receives some support from what Shamil himself said more than once on the subject.

However, Alexander still continued unwell, and the obstinacy of his illness could only be explained by the unhealthiness of the apartment in which the captives were confined; for now that the Princesses had been joined by their servants, there were twenty persons living in a room less than eighteen feet square. Accordingly the sick child was taken out into the gallery, where he had to be nursed all night.

The Princesses used frequently to receive visits from Shamil's wives, who now came in at all times merely for the sake of their society. The conversation was carried on by means of two interpreters,—one a Georgian girl of sixteen, who had been taken prisoner when she was a child, and whose reminiscences of her native tongue were very slight; and the other a Touchian * about thirty-five years of age, who, although she was quite grown up at the time of her capture, had also nearly forgotten the language of Georgia. However, by means of these women, the Princesses and Shamil's wives were able to interchange remarks. The observations of the wives were very characteristic, and exhibited in a striking manner the disposition of each. Shouanette always inquired about the Princess Chavchavadzey's husband, and the family affairs of both, whereas Zaidette was perpetually putting questions to them on the subject of their fortune, and did not conceal her wish to ascertain what amount of ransom Shamil might expect for them. However Zaidette ascertained nothing by her inquiries, as the Princesses assured them, very justly, that they had lost all they possessed with Tsenondahl.

"But perhaps you have money buried somewhere?" persisted Zaidette.

"We have nothing of the kind buried," replied the Princesses. "It is not the custom in our country to conceal treasures in the earth."

It was impossible not to feel well disposed towards

* A tribe at the foot of the Caucasus, not far from Tiflis.

the other wives, who never annoyed and irritated the captives by such questions as the above.

Shouanette for some time appeared to be on her guard, and was rather silent, as though waiting to learn more of the captives' dispositions. This cautiousness did not please every one; and the Princess Orbeliani looked upon it as dissimulation, while Madame Drancey plainly accused Shouanette of treachery. Indeed, in comparing Shouanette and Zaidette, the French lady went so far as to express her preference of the latter. "Elle a l'air distingué," she said.

The Princess Chavchavadzey, however, still preferred Shouanette; and we shall see from the sequel that she was not mistaken. Two weeks had now passed away, when Daniel-Sultan * and several Naibs arrived at Shamil's house. They remained with him several days, and lived in the visitors' room next the "old private room." They were attended by Labazan, Bey-Mirza, and Selim, with all of whom we have already made acquaintance. These men had to serve the Naibs' meals, and, on coming out of the room with the remains, always gave some delicate morsels to the Princesses' servants, who waited for them in the gallery.

The Princesses themselves were not allowed to enter the gallery; and they were living a life of the most tiresome monotony, broken only by an occasional gleam of hope, when one morning they were suddenly in-

* This chief, formerly the Han, or Khan, of Elisei, and a major-general in the Russian service, had deserted to Shamil. His name had once great influence in the mountains; but it is said that the suspicious Iman does not place entire confidence in him.

formed that a parcel had been sent to them by their relatives. This caused them the liveliest joy, not for the sake of the contents, but from the mere fact that it came from Kahetia, and reminded them that their friends were constantly thinking of them. Such moments as these were the only really happy ones the Princesses knew during their long and tedious captivity. Each present brought with it the image of the person who sent it, and the conversation would then soon become converted into a chorus of home reminiscences.

It was twilight before the parcel in question was given into the Princesses' hands, so that they passed the whole day in pleasant anticipations as to what it contained. It consisted of stockings, soap, combs, shoes, and towels; and as it was not accompanied by a letter, the captives were for some time at a loss to discover who had sent it. At last, they found the initials L. N. embroidered in the corner of one of the handkerchiefs, and at once determined that the present came from Louis Nicolai. The children jumped about with delight, when they heard the name of their relative, who could scarcely have imagined the joyful effect which his parcel was destined to produce.

The delight of the captives astonished the inhabitants of the seraglio. Zaidette and some of the other women inquired the cause, but were not satisfied with the explanation that was given to them, being unable to comprehend how such a trifling present could produce such infinite joy.

Among the contents of Baron Nicolai's parcel, the

Princesses were much rejoiced at finding a copy of the "Imitation of Jesus Christ."

A week after the arrival of the parcel the Princesses were informed that a man from Kahetia had just reached the *aoul*, and was waiting to see them.

The captives inquired in vain who the visitor was, and from what part of Kahetia he came. Next morning, however, Nicolas, a serf belonging to the estate of one of the Princesses' relatives, presented himself.*

Nicolas's interview with the Princesses lasted about ten minutes. Neither he nor they were allowed to approach the door, they being inside the room while he was kept in the courtyard near the balcony. A crowd of servants surrounded Nicolas as long as he remained talking with the Princesses, probably with the view of repeating the conversation to Shamil. Consequently he said but little, and confined himself to assuring them that their friends were constantly occupying themselves about their liberation, and that Prince David Chavchavadzey, who was at Tiflis, was quite well. The captives, on their side, told Nicolas that negotiations ought to be opened in the first instance, and without delay, for the release of the children and invalids. The parting did not take place without tears; and Nicolas, as he went away, expressed his astonishment at the thinness of the captives, saying that it was impossible to recognise the Princess Chavchavadzey.

Two days afterwards, when the faithful Nicolas

* Nicolas himself proposed to visit the Princesses; and afterwards, in return for the courage and devotion which had prompted him to make so dangerous a journey, received his freedom.

returned to Hassaff-Yourt, where Prince David was waiting for him, his account of the Princesses' appearance and the hardships they were suffering had the effect of hastening the commencement of negotiations; and, without waiting for any proposition from Shamil, Prince Chavchavadzey at once despatched a letter on the subject to the Iman.

Nicolas had brought a letter to the captives from Baroness Nicolai *; but it was not given to them until after the interview, and probably not until Shamil had read it himself. The letter informed them that Prince Chavchavadzey was well and staying in the house of the writer at Tiflis; that he was on the point of starting for Hassaff-Yourt (on the frontiers of Shamil's territory); that the news of the calamity which had happened to the Princesses had been forwarded to their relatives at Moscow, but that it had been kept secret from their old father the Tsarevitch of Georgia.

It has been already mentioned that the Tsarevitch died before the news of the incursion into Kahetia reached him; but the baroness was naturally anxious to spare the captives the shock such a communication would have caused them. The Princesses had already suffered so much that their correspondent may be readily excused for having wished to save them the infliction of a fresh pang; but from what afterwards occurred, it appeared that it would have been better for them if they had heard the truth in the first instance.

Zaidette and the steward Hadjio, who brought the

* The Baroness Nicolai was Princess Chavchavadzey by birth, being the sister of Prince David.

Princesses the letter, accused them of endeavouring to deceive Shamil.

"Why do they advise you to conceal your father's name," said they, "if there is no intention of misleading him?"

The Princesses assured them that the letter contained no such advice; that it merely stated how the news of their captivity had been kept from their father, who was an old man and might have been hurried to the grave by the information; and finally that the letter had in all probability been badly translated to Shamil.

But the assurances of the Princesses were in vain. They were overwhelmed with reproaches, and even threats. Accordingly they requested that the letter might be translated to Shamil again, not by Indris, the ordinary interpreter, but by some other person. The steward replied that this was useless, that Indris was a good interpreter, and that he had already given the correct translation of the letter.

The Princesses feared serious consequences might result from the suspicion cast upon them, and were much grieved at not having an opportunity granted them of proving the truth of what they had asserted. Shouanette, who had hitherto been silent and reserved, now showed what a really kind heart she possessed. She took the unlucky letter herself and set off to her husband; and the same day Shamil sent for another interpreter, an Armenian named Shah-Abbas, who, on his arrival, was ordered to translate the passage which had caused so much excitement and controversy. The version of Shah-Abbas was satisfactory; but the

Princesses had made a determined enemy of Indris, who was reprimanded by Shamil for his mistranslation, and excluded for the future from the Iman's interviews with the captives. Indris attempted to justify himself, saying that the letter was badly written and almost illegible; but these excuses availed nothing in the eyes of his chief, and the enraged deserter from that moment nourished projects of vengeance against the Princesses. When there was anything disagreeable to tell them, and Shah-Abbas in the goodness of his heart hesitated about communicating it, Indris was always delighted to convey the disagreeable information himself, and more than once he undertook the pleasing task of acquainting the prisoners with the unreasonable decisions of the National Council respecting their liberation.

The National Council is not such an unimportant institution as is imagined by those who believe in the despotic and unlimited power of Shamil. As a proof of this it need only be stated that, during the negotiations for the liberation of the Princesses, Shamil had not the power to diminish the sum fixed by the National Council for their ransom, though, for his own part, he was only anxious to obtain his son from the Russians.

After the affair of the mistranslated letter, the captives became more intimate with Shouanette, and there was no longer any difference of opinion as to her disposition. Shouanette, on her side, became kinder every day to the captives, and visited them constantly, whereas Zaidette now went but seldom into their room.

Soon afterwards Shouanette obtained permission for the Princesses to go out of their close room into the

gallery, but only upon condition that they would never appear there when Shamil could see them. This condition, as it afterwards turned out, had been invented by the jealous Zaidette; but, however that may have been, the Princesses observed it most scrupulously, and never entered the balcony until after Shamil had said his evening prayer, and retired to rest.

Late at night, when there was no longer any obstacle to their appearance, they entered the gallery, and sat down on a bench to enjoy the fresh air of which they had so long been deprived. They were then joined by Shamil's wives and children, the servants, and generally all who felt any curiosity about them. But their most constant visitor was the beautiful Shouanette. She had now made up her mind to talk with them in the Russian language; and although she had much difficulty in doing so, she contrived to make herself understood without the assistance of interpreters, and was consequently enabled to speak much more freely than she had done before. Shouanette spoke on several occasions of the rules and customs of the seraglio. Her cousins had at one time been in the habit of coming to see her from Mosdok; but at last their visits were forbidden, and Shouanette was assured that the Russian Government had objected to them. She also mentioned many particulars about her early life, and her marriage with Shamil, and dwelt especially on the profound affection she entertained for him.

These interesting conversations generally lasted until a very late hour, and, as we have before stated, did not begin until after Shamil had retired to rest.

We may here state how Shamil is in the habit of passing his day.

He rises at six. At seven he takes tea, with milk and buns. This is prepared and taken to him by Shouanette.

He is then occupied alone, or receives visits, until one o'clock, when he dines. The dinner is very simple, and is brought to him by Zaidette and Shouanette.

After dinner he is again alone until nine, when he sups, and at eleven goes to bed.

On Friday he spends a portion of his time at the mosque.

It will be seen from the above programme that Aminette, the beauty of seventeen, is kept at a distance, and has no share at all in waiting upon the lord of the seraglio. It is difficult to say what Shamil's feelings towards her really are, but he appeared to look upon her more as a plaything than as a wife or a companion, and in the every-day life of the seraglio we find that she is quite in the background. Notwithstanding this, Aminette seemed to be more in Shamil's favour than Zaidette; and the Princesses ascertained that the latter took precedence of the other wives simply because she was the daughter of one of the most important of Shamil's advisers. Probably his union with Zaidette was what is called a *mariage d'intérêt*, and he had only chosen her in order to strengthen his friendship with Djemmal-Eddin, whose influence on the people was very great.

But the ruler of Shamil's heart was beyond doubt Shouanette. Zaidette certainly directed the household

affairs of the seraglio in a despotic manner; but Shouanette gave up those cares the more willingly that it allowed her time to occupy herself with what was more important in her eyes, namely, the means of pleasing her husband, and preserving his affection. And Shouanette was right; for while Zaidette was dirty and in disorder, jingling her keys in the midst of the servants, and wholly absorbed in her common-place occupation, *she* was always neatly and tastefully dressed, and ready at any moment to appear in all her charms before Shamil. As for Aminette, she was as yet too young to enter into such contests, and probably that very fact rendered it unnecessary for her to do so, for youth was precisely the quality in which her rivals were beginning to fail.

CHAP. III.

ONE evening the Princesses had gone into the gallery as usual, and had taken their seats on the bench in order to enjoy the freshness of the moonlight night after the overwhelming heat of an August day, when Shamil's two eldest wives entered, and sat down beside them.

"This morning," commenced Zaidette, "we saw a woman whose son took part in the incursion into Kahetia, and was in your house at Tsenondahl. He was astonished at so much riches, and could scarcely believe that all he saw belonged to one man."

"Yes," answered the Princess Chavchavadzey, "that was all ours; but it is all gone now, and really we shall not regret it if God will only permit us to return to our native land."

"What!" interrupted Zaidette eagerly; "then you will be compensated for all you have lost?"

The Princess comprehended the avarice that dictated this question of Zaidette's, but was silent on the subject, and calmly replied,

"I shall not have a quarter of what I had before; but I shall forget my misfortunes in the society of my husband and children."

"Yes, you are happy; in your families there is only one wife, but with us ——"

Here Shouanette interposed with warmth:

"That is true," she said in Russian, "the law is different here; but I willingly submit to it, for Shamil is so just and honourable that we have never any cause to complain of him, and to do so only proves incapacity to appreciate him. He makes no difference whatever between us."

Shouanette was not speaking very candidly now; for she knew that she was Shamil's real wife, and that Zaidette was only his housekeeper.

"He treats our children equally well," continued Shouanette. "I was in Russia when I was very young, but I understood what was passing around me, and saw and heard a great deal, and I can assure you that Shamil, though a Tartar*, is better than many Christians."

The Princesses were much interested by these conversations, which generally exhibited the egotism of Zaidette and the elevated love of Shouanette in the most striking contrast. The following incident will also serve to show how very different were the dispositions of the two.

The day after the conversation about the Mahometan and Christian systems of matrimony, the Princesses remarked that in one of the corners of the courtyard some builders were at work (they were constructing Shamil's new private room on the left of the gates). Zaidette informed them that this was intended for them and the other captives, and proposed that they should go and look at it. The Princesses set off with their conductress, who, however, led the Princess Chavchav-

* That is to say, a Mussulman.

adzey mysteriously on one side, and said to her, still more mysteriously, through the interpreter, a girl of thirteen,—

"May I be unreserved with you?"

"I shall not repeat anything you say," was the answer.

"Listen, then," commenced Zaidette. "I am out of health. I have been ill ever since my first confinement, and it appears doubtful whether I shall ever have any more children. This makes my position worse every day, and Shouanette is gradually taking entire possession of Shamil. If I were to have a son," she continued, "Shamil would love me again."

This one, reflected the Princess, loves him too, but only with the selfish love of Tartar women, whereas to Shouanette his fame is dear. She loves him for his own sake, and is ready to hate any one who would dare to speak against the possessor of her heart.

"What is it to me that they pay me all the respect due to the eldest wife?" added the neglected Zaidette; "I feel, I see, that in reality Shouanette reigns. And I know that you can assist me."

"But how can I help you?" asked the Princess.

"I will tell you. I have been terribly drugged, but no medicine does me the least good. At last I have been advised to write to some doctor in Russia. Say that you are ill, and require a Russian doctor. Shamil will instantly send to your relatives, and they will do anything for you."

"No, Zaidette, that could never be managed. No doctor would consent to come, for fear of either losing his life, or being kept a prisoner here for ever."

"Then ask them to send you some medicine. Say that you have my illness."

The Princess agreed to this, and the affair was settled. A letter was sent to Hassaff-Yourt, and the messenger soon afterwards returned with the medicine required. This was repeated several times; and as long as Zaidette was under medical treatment, her conduct to the captives was amiable enough. She gave them extra dishes at dinner, frequently brought them fruit, and never said anything disagreeable. This from Zaidette was astonishing, but her kindness soon came to an end. It is unknown what direct effect the medicine had upon her; but it is certain that when she gave up taking it her attention to the captives suddenly ceased, their portions at dinner were diminished, there were no signs whatever of fruit, and on the very first opportunity the greedy Tartar woman reappeared in all her native moral deformity.

This opportunity occurred as follows. Mohammed, an inhabitant of one of the villages on the frontier, and his friend Hassan, also from the vicinity of Hassaff-Yourt, had been chosen by General Nicolai, as bold, sagacious men, to open negotiations for the liberation of the captives. They arrived at Dargi-Vedenno with a letter to the Princesses, which merely informed them that Prince David was at Hassaff-Yourt, and that the messengers were commissioned to treat for their release. The captives were asked to come out on to the balcony, in order to see the men who had arrived from Georgia to speak about the ransom, and found Hassan, Mohammed, and one Hadji, the brother of the latter, waiting for

them in the courtyard. The envoys informed the Princesses that it was Shamil's intention to demand a ransom of five million roubles*, and asked whether there was any chance of their relatives paying that sum.

The Princesses answered that all their relatives together never had, and never would possess such a sum.

"But about how much do you think they could pay?" inquired the messengers.

"We do not know. Either nothing or very little."

On hearing this reply Hadjio, Zaidette, and those who were with them, began to prove that it was quite possible for their relatives to pay a large amount for them, and began to dispute on the subject, but of course without arriving at any conclusion. The discussion continued during the two following days; and among other arguments, more or less absurd, which Zaidette advanced, was one that was very original.

Producing a number of the *Russian Invalid*† (of the 6th–9th August), Zaidette pointed out a paragraph in which it was stated that a sum of several millions had been granted for some special purpose by the English Government.

"You see," said Hadjio at the same time, "that such sums do exist in the world. If the Queen of England can pay millions, surely the Empress of Russia can do the same."

* About 830,000*l.* sterling.

† The "*Rousky Invalid*" of St. Petersburgh, and the "*Kavkas*" of Tiflis (in which the substance of the present narrative originally appeared) are received regularly at Dargi-Vedenno—by what means it is impossible to say. The interpreter, Shah-Abbas, used to read them to Shamil, and they were afterwards lent to the Princesses.

"It is quite possible that the Empress of Russia may possess five million roubles, or even more," replied the Princess Chavchavadzey; "you must remember, however, that you have not taken her prisoner, but only us."

The answer pleased Hadjio, who smiled, and appeared anxious to terminate the conversation; but Zaidette was not to be silenced so easily.

"In the house at Tsenondahl," she continued — addressing the Princess Orbeliani — "a quantity of papers were found, among which were several signed by your husband. Can you not obtain the money for them, and give it to us?"

"That money, according to our law, belongs to my husband's heir, that is to say, to my son George, and will not be received until he is of age," answered the Princess.

"Then your son will remain until he is of age with us," pursued Zaidette, apparently much pleased with her retort.

These ill-natured, malicious remarks perplexed and disheartened the captives, and the Princess Orbeliani burst into tears.

"Do not cry," continued the Tartar woman, rejoicing in the latter's grief; "your little boy is strong, and will grow up hardy among our mountains."

The Princess had nothing to reply, and did not wish to continue the conversation.

In the evening the envoys from Kahetia were again brought to the Princesses' balcony, and Hadjio proposed that they should write to Prince David, informing him of Shamil's demand, and urging him to comply with it.

The Princesses wrote a letter, which was taken to Shamil, and returned by him to the writers.

They then composed a second letter, which was approved of, and sent off to Hassaff-Yourt by the messengers.

Soon afterwards occurred another of those disagreeable scenes for which the captives had to thank Zaidette, and in which Shouanette always appeared like a good angel.

Zaidette wished to recommence the conversation about the five millions, and finding the Princesses would not talk on the subject, took away a little girl of five years old, named Thecla, and placed her in her mother-in-law's room, with Shamil's children. Zaidette then caressed the little girl, and told her she would be much happier where she was than in Kahetia; for that here she would be equal to any one, whereas in her own country she would only be a servant. Of course the little girl was unable to understand all this, and did nothing but cry. The Princesses on their side were indignant at the child being taken from them. Beyond the mere offence of removing her violently from their room, they were deeply grieved at the thought of the future which Zaidette was preparing for her, and above all were shocked at the prospect of a Christian soul being lost in Islamism. They protested loudly against Zaidette's tyranny, and went so far as to reproach Shamil for permitting it. Then Zaidette lost all patience, and screamed out to the captives, —

"How dare you rebel against the Iman? He is a holy man, and you are his captives and slaves."

These words were translated to the Princesses by Shouanette, who added hurriedly in Russian, "never say anything against Shamil. When you have lived here a little time, you will see that he is a kind and just man. He is obliged to convince the people who took you prisoners, and who have a right to expect a ransom, that he is working for their benefit; and besides it is unsafe to talk as you do before persons who can understand what you say, and repeat your words, with additions of their own, to Shamil."

The Princesses were quieted, and felt more disposed than ever in favour of Shouanette. Their indiscretion in the meanwhile had no bad result, thanks, no doubt, to Shouanette's manner of explaining it.

Many days were now passed in the most monotonous manner while the Princesses were waiting for answers to the letters they had sent to Hassaff-Yourt by Mohammed and Hassan. But during this time Aminette, Shamil's youngest wife, became more intimate with them, and the captives had much pleasure in studying her wild, untutored disposition.

Aminette for a long time appeared to avoid any close acquaintance with the Princesses, who only saw her as she was passing, or at a distance in Shouanette's room where she often sat singing and doing her work. She had a beautiful voice, and sang her half-forgotten songs of Kistee in a very agreeable manner. At other times she was to be seen in the midst of the children, with whom she ran races, jumped, and occasionally climbed on to the roof of the seraglio, when she would look long and earnestly into the distance, perhaps in the direction

of her native land. At last, little by little, Aminette began to find a pleasure in conversing with the captives, and finally became quite intimate with them. She was altogether a child of nature, and with a certain amount of sense she at the same time exhibited feeling, affection, and a childish simplicity, which was very attractive, and at the same time deeply affecting. Aminette understood her position, and submitted to it carelessly. She envied no one, and hated no one but Zaidette, whom she nevertheless frequently forgave with the most sincere generosity. On one occasion when Aminette was alone with the captives, she gave them the following account of herself.

"I am indebted for everything I possess to Shamil," she commenced. "I was taken captive when very young, and brought straight to his house. I was of the same age as his son Kazi-Machmat, and we played and grew up together; and I was not unhappy, although I could not help hoping that I might some day return to my native land to my mother and sisters. But when I grew up, and Shamil made me his wife, that hope disappeared for ever. Then I endeavoured to make them bring my mother to me from Kistee. Shamil at last complied with my wish, and my mother was sent for. Kazi-Machmat was married about the same time, and sent away to govern his province, and I remained quite alone; that is to say, not altogether alone, for there are a great many persons here, but I could not become intimate with them as I had been with Kazi-Machmat from the period of infancy. I do not like Zaidette; she is mean, jealous,

and a wicked woman in all respects. She is never satisfied. The whole house is entrusted to her, but no one can please her, and she is on bad terms with every one. I love Shouanette, and who would not love her? She is good to all who come near her. She does not interfere in the household affairs and do the work of the servants, but she will intercede with Shamil for any one, and will take all kinds of trouble to benefit another person. However, there is not much friendship even between myself and her. She is much older than I am; and, somehow or other, we never agree. And Napicette is too young for me; so that altogether I live mostly by myself ——"

"And your husband Shamil?" suggested the Princesses.

"Shamil? I somehow or other cannot get accustomed to him; when I am in his presence I am almost afraid to breathe."

The unreserved confession of the beautiful Kistian explained a great deal of the life in the seraglio to the Princesses, and confirmed on many points their own guesses and conclusions.

Another time Aminette described to the captives the manners and customs of the people among whom she was fated to pass her monotonous life. The Princesses would thus have been in a position to give interesting particulars respecting the marriages and funerals of the mountaineers; only they unfortunately could not remember enough of Aminette's descriptions to enable them to do so with the necessary completeness.

CHAP. IV.

On the 29th of August, Shouanette was taken ill, and on the 30th she was brought to bed of a little girl. Shamil visited his favourite several times. Sometimes he went into the room, and at others only approached the door and inquired after her health. Aminette never left the invalid, but Zaidette visited her very seldom, and was enraged that Shamil "troubled himself too much about her." Shamil was in reality very anxious about Shouanette, whose illness had assumed a dangerous turn; and there was a time when all the seraglio, including even Zaidette, partook of Shamil's uneasiness. In the midst of the general confusion Zaidette ran one morning into the captives' rooms, and solemnly addressed them as follows:

"Probably you have evil objects about you, such as watches or something of that kind, which do us harm. Therefore do not go out on the gallery any more until Shouanette is better."

In this seemingly superstitious injunction there was not so much absurdity as at first appeared. The captives soon perceived that it was caused by the same fears that Zaidette had once before evinced, and that she was afraid lest Shamil, in crossing the gallery to go to Shouanette's room, might see them and feel more

favourably disposed towards them than would be agreeable to her.

The captives had to submit to Zaidette's orders, and again remained shut up for several days in their close, suffocating room.

About that time the news was spread through the seraglio that Kazi-Machmat had arrived; and soon afterwards the captives heard the report of firearms, which were being discharged in the outer court in honour of his visit. In the seraglio all was joy and excitement, expressed in a general running to and fro. The Princesses' servants ran to the gates, and on their return related that a crowd of persons had assembled in the outer court and were kissing the skirt of Kazi-Machmat's dress. Then the gates were opened, and Kazi-Machmat rode into the interior court. He proceeded in the direction of the apartments of his grandmother Bahoo, pulled up before the gallery in front of her room, dismounted, and ran to greet her. Immediately afterwards his servant entered the courtyard, and the Princesses were informed that this was his favourite attendant, and that he was an Armenian captive named Mouslin.

The Princesses had already seen Kazi-Machmat at the tower of Pohali, but at that time they were not in a suitable frame of mind to pay much attention to Shamil's heir.* At present they had a good opportunity of examining him. He was a young man of about twenty

* Djemmal-Eddin, the eldest son, had been so long in Russia, and there was so little chance of his ever returning to his father, that the second son had been named heir in his place.

years of age, fair, a little marked with the small pox, with large and rather prominent features, tall, slim, well-formed, and graceful. Like the Mingrelians, he accompanies his words with rather affected gestures; but they become him, and enable him to exhibit a great deal of natural grace.

While Mouslin was engaged unharnessing and putting up the horses, Kazi-Machmat came out of his grandmother's apartment, and meeting Hadjio the steward, went with him to visit his father. After remaining some time with Shamil, he came out and proceeded along the court to the apartment of Shouanette, inquired after her health, and then returned to his grandmother and sisters, with whom he remained until the evening. In the evening he went out with his father to the mosque.*

During their absence Aminette entered the Princesses' room in a state of great delight, and invited them to come and hear Kazi-Machmat's people sing. The Princesses went out into the gallery, sat down upon the bench, and listened to the mountaineers, who had taken up their position in Kazi-Machmat's room and were chanting in chorus the "Lia-illiahi-il-Allah," the only thing the Murids are allowed to sing. The air was much more agreeable than

* Friday was Shamil's usual day for attending the mosque, when he dressed himself either in white, in green, or in red, with the exception of his *chalma*, which was always white. On these occasions his wives used to run to the partition known as the "wall of jealousy," and peep through some crevice to see the solemn procession go forth. After Shamil's departure Shouanette arranges his bedchamber, and Aminette shakes the carpets and sets his reception-rooms in order.

those to which the ordinary residents had accustomed them. These latter airs, nevertheless, made a great impression on the Princess Chavchavadzey's children, who were in the habit of singing them after they returned to Kahetia, where the Mahometan chants, as executed by the Christian children, produced the strangest effect.

A few days after the arrival of Kazi-Machmat, Daniel-Sultan returned with several Naibs. The Naibs composed Shamil's superior council, and they were now coming to Dargi-Vedenno for a special deliberation. Selim, who waited upon the visitors, told the captives that the council was being held with the view of coming to some decision respecting them; but what the precise subject of discussion was did not appear. Daniel-Sultan mentioned that, during the attack on Kahetia, it was Prince David who had conducted the defence of Shildy; and Selim assured the Princesses that Shamil had spoken of him with the greatest respect, and had said that he esteemed bravery, even in an enemy. Selim argued from this that the captives would at present be better treated than before; but his anticipations proved to be incorrect.

Mohammed now arrived for the second time from Hassaff-Yourt. He had been instructed to see all the captives himself, and was the bearer of a letter to the Princesses, inclosing ten roubles.* The prisoners were all taken out into the yard for Mohammed to see them;

* About thirty-three shillings. To have sent more would have been imprudent, and indeed useless, as a large sum would never have reached its destination.

and both he and the interpreter Shah-Abbas were much struck by the change which had taken place in their appearance, for they had now grown terribly thin.

Prince David's letter to the Princesses announced that he was making all his endeavours to get Shamil's son, Djemmal-Eddin to exchange for them, but that hitherto he had met with but little success. The Prince also wrote to Shamil, and forwarded several letters to the Princesses from various relatives of theirs.

The captives' life continued as before, the monotony being only broken by occasional domestic incidents of no very great importance. Thus, for instance, on the night of the 10th or 11th of September one of the Princesses' servants announced that she was on the point of being confined. The woman who cooked the captives' meals ran to call Zaidette, who instantly appeared, ordered the patient to be provided with a bed, and found a nurse for her among the Georgian captives. The patient's sufferings were long. At dawn Aminette came running in (she never walked; she always ran), and, as soon as she learnt what the matter was, set off to Shouanette's room and brought back the latter's nurse, who had attended her throughout her recent confinement. At noon a boy was born, and at the same time shots were fired in the courtyard by the mountaineers, who regarded the birth of a male child as a good omen for the house. Soon afterwards a fat sheep was killed, roasted, and sent to the captives.

The next day the captives saw Shouanette. She had passed through her period of purification, and forthwith hurried to see her captive friends. The Princesses were

astonished at the beauty of their visitor. She had become somewhat thinner and paler; and this thinness and paleness became her in a remarkable manner, and gave her an expression of languor which made her what is called "interesting." All the captives congratulated Shouanette with one voice; and Zaidette, hearing the congratulations, compressed her lips with evident annoyance. Shouanette was a little confused, and said,—

"But my child is very ugly, it is so small and so thin. Shamil wishes me to nurse it myself, but I cannot.* What am I to do? I worry myself about it so much that I cannot sleep at night."

"If that be the case you ought certainly to have a wet nurse," said the Princess.

"But no wet nurse would come here," replied Shouanette; "and I should not like to let the child be taken away among strangers."

"But they would bring it to you from time to time."

"Yes, if it were well; but if it should happen to be ill, they would not wish to show it to me. You already know that we cannot quit the seraglio under any pretext whatever."

After this conversation Shouanette left the Princess, in a state of great agitation. But they soon afterwards heard that all had been arranged, and that she had taken Han-Aga (Labazan's wife) for wet nurse. The Tartar woman fed the child through the night, and Shouanette fed it through the day.

All these minute details of the life of the seraglio

* Shamil had expressed this wish at the suggestion of Zaidette.

interested the captives very much from their novelty and originality. But soon they had neither time nor inclination for paying attention to such matters. The Princess Chavchavadzèy fell ill; and Shamil's mother-in-law, Bahoo, came with his two eldest wives to visit the invalid, when it was determined that half the servants should be taken away, in order to leave more space in the room and render it less suffocating.

The servants were much alarmed by this decision. They were afraid of being lost if they were once taken out into the *aoul*, and begged with tears and sobs to be allowed to remain with the Princesses. The Princesses themselves joined in their entreaties, and they were all left together as before.

About this time Zachar, one of Prince Gregory Orbeliani's* servants, arrived at Vedenno. He was acquainted with the language of Chechni, and requested permission to visit the Princesses. This was granted, and he was enabled to see in what confinement they lived, and on what bad food they subsisted. The letters which he brought to the captives were, as usual, full of encouragement and hope, and expressed a conviction that their liberation would soon be effected.

In the evening of the same day the Princesses were informed that Prince David had offered Shamil a ransom of four *azarie*.† The Princesses did not understand the

* The brother of the Princess Orbeliani's late husband, holding the rank of Lieutenant-General, and commanding the army between Daghestan and the Caspian Sea. This general gained an important victory over the mountaineers in the summer of the present year.

† The Lesghian *azaria* is equal to ten thousand roubles.

meaning of the word, and remained as ignorant as they were before of the amount proposed.

Zachar returned to Hassaff-Yourt with letters from the captives and from Shamil; and the usual monotony again prevailed in the seraglio. Among the few things which occurred to interest them were the ceremony of naming Shouanette's little child, and the celebration of the Mussulman festival of the Bairam. At other times, too, they were amused by the childlike innocence of Aminette, and once they were allowed to go out into the *aoul* and take the only walk that was allowed them during their captivity. Of these events we shall speak in the order in which they occurred.

The ceremony of naming Shamil's daughter was performed with some solemnity.

Early in the morning the most important ladies of the *aoul*, that is to say, the wives of the Naibs, assembled in Shouanette's room. Then the steward Hadjio read some prayers from the Koran over the little girl's head, and named her Saidette. Next began the feast of the women. The Naibs' wives and all the women of the seraglio sat down, and partook of mutton, rice, and various sweetmeats. The captives, of course, had no share in this feast, but they had the honour of receiving a visit from the Naibs' wives, who regarded them with wonderful curiosity.

The great holiday of the Bairam was now approaching, and Kazi-Machmat, who on his first visit had remained a very short time at the seraglio, returned. This time the heir of the Iman of Daghestan stayed much longer at Vedenno, but unfortunately he came, as on the

previous occasion, without his wife, of whom the captives had heard a very favourable account. Kazi-Machmat was principally occupied in riding, and in teaching the youths of the *aoul* to fire or fence. Of course these exercises, which apparently constituted the reviews of Chechni, took place in the *aoul*, and not in the court-yard of the seraglio.

During the whole period of Kazi-Machmat's stay in the seraglio, the Princesses could not admire Aminette enough. She was always gay, playful, and happy; and it was not difficult to imagine the cause. She now saw the companion of her childhood every day. One morning she went to the rooms of Bahoo, where Kazi-Machmat was residing. She remained there a considerable time, and returned with some work, to which she applied herself with evident pleasure. It appeared that Kazi-Machmat had given her his yellow shoes and several other articles of dress to mend.

Another time when Shamil was absent, Aminette came running to the Princesses with a suggestion that they should pay a secret visit to the Iman's private apartment. The captives accompanied her with fear and trembling; but curiosity overcame every other feeling. In Shamil's private room they saw some very rich carpets and a great number of books. Aminette also showed them some beautiful Georgian pistols mounted in silver, and pistol cases of cloth embroidered in silver and gold. There was nothing else very remarkable to be seen. Aminette took away one of the pistol-cases, and, when she returned with the captives to their room, took its pattern and shape. She then carried it back to Shamil's room,

and afterwards set eagerly to work to embroider one like it. She was preparing a present for Kazi-Machmat; but her amiability was not appreciated, and the beautiful cases were given by the young man to his brother.

The feast of the Bairam had now arrived. A number of oxen and sheep were driven into the courtyard, and all the inhabitants of the seraglio assembled there in their best attire. At last Shamil appeared, approached the crowd with much solemnity, and killed one of the sheep with his own hand. This was the signal for a general massacre, in which all present took part with most remarkable zest. A sea of blood flowed along the great square of the seraglio, but it was soon swept away, and the courtyard rendered as clean as before. The meat was cut up, salted, and hung up in the top floor of Shamil's house. Here Zaidette was in her own sphere.

The feast took place in the outer courtyard. Meat was devoured in enormous quantities, but of course there was no wine, the drink consisting of a kind of mead and *bousa*.* The captives also received several huge joints of meat, boiled, roast, and even raw, the last of which they had to cook for themselves.†

On this festive day the male captives were invited also to a dinner. The peasants and militiamen dined in the courtyard; and the two Princes were served in the

* A beverage made of milk.

† In addition to the frugal repast provided by Zaidette, the captives usually purchased provisions, which they prepared themselves at their own fireplace. For a fowl the customary price was ten *copeiks* (four pence).

strangers' room, where there was a window looking out on to the court.

One of the servants said to the Princesses, "Your Georgians are dining in the visitors' room. Upon this the Princesses hurried to the window*, their hearts throbbing fast lest Zaidette or Shamil should observe them. But this fear was overcome by their curiosity and the interest they took in their fellow-sufferers; and the Princesses even went so far as to address them from their place of observation.

"Are you alive, are you all alive?" they inquired.

"Yes; and you too are living," God be thanked, answered the delighted Princes. "We often hear of you, but we do not know whether what we hear be true."

This terminated their conversation, which could not have been continued without great danger. Having wished each other all the happiness that was possible, the two parties did not exchange another word.

When they had taken their seats again in the room, the Princesses began to speak of the change that had taken place in the appearance of Princes Chavchavadzey and Vagnadzey. The former had become awfully thin, and the face of the latter was quite lost in a thick beard.†

After the Bairam, Zaidette recommenced her system

* When any of the Naibs, or other visitors, were living in the visitors' room, Zaidette and Shouanette used to go stealthily to one of the windows, in hopes of catching a glimpse of the strangers, and Aminette and Napicette now followed their example.

† In Russia the peasants, and nearly all the merchants, wear beards; but the rest of the population, including of course all who are in the military or civil service, shave.

of persecution. For many days she did her best to starve the captives, and she constantly annoyed them by her ill-natured remarks, while Shouanette and Aminette consoled them as usual with words of kindness and friendship.

Aminette became particularly intimate with the Princess Baratoff; and sometimes the two young girls were so merry, that for a time they made the captives forget their misfortunes. The Princess Baratoff was especially amusing with the tricks she played upon the simple-minded and superstitious Hadjio.

He had taken a great fancy to her, and the Princess Nina profited by this to make him the subject of her practical jokes. Some how or other she ascertained that every good Murid must above all avoid the touch of an unclean, that is to say, of a Christian woman. If any such misfortune happened to him, he was obliged by the sacred law to perform his ablutions seven times, in order to get rid of its evil effect. Being fully aware of this, the Princess Nina, probably at the instigation of Aminette, obliged the unfortunate man to perform his sevenfold ablutions twenty times a day. At last Hadjio avoided the young Princess as if she had been fire, and went in a cautious and circuitous manner round every point where she was likely to make her appearance. He was moreover in a constant state of trepidation as long as he was in the same room with her, and was particularly amusing whenever she gave the least sign of approaching him.

Notwithstanding this, he made his appearance every day to inquire after the Princesses' health; but he was sent for this purpose by Shamil, and his fear of disobey-

ing his chief was even greater than that of being contaminated by the touch of the Princess Nina Baratoff.

Here it is impossible not to notice the difference between the present manners and customs of Shamil's household and those of ten or twelve years since. A remarkable improvement has taken place; but how this improvement has been brought about, it is difficult to explain. It may perhaps be accounted for by some change in the disposition of Shamil himself, who is now getting advanced in years, or by the personal influence of such a woman as Shouanette; in any case, he must be affected by his contact with civilisation, which gradually, though almost imperceptibly, is penetrating, in spite of all obstacles, into the mountain homes of these Mahometan tribes. But it is impossible not to be struck by the wonderful change which has taken place since 1842, when Prince Orbeliani was in captivity with Shamil, and was infamously treated. At present the representative of barbarous tribes utters human sentiments, and behaves with something like humanity. The people by whom he is surrounded give evidence of kindness, are not entirely crushed by despotism, and are not merely attached to him from fanaticism, but love him sincerely and devotedly as a man. Twelve years before, nothing of this kind existed in the Caucasus.

If good influences can have any kind of effect on these tribes, hardened as they are by barbarism, then for the sake of humanity let us hope that these influences will be continued and strengthened. Probably the return of

Shamil's son, so strangely and unexpectedly brought about, will have a highly beneficial effect on the mountaineers. With his Russian education, and his superior abilities as developed by civilised life, Djemmal Eddin cannot fail to produce a change in all who are brought into connection with him.

CHAP. V.

During the latter portion of their residence at Dargi-Vedenno the Princesses suffered a great deal of annoyance from their servants, to whom they had sacrificed so much of their own comfort. These women often forgot themselves so far as to utter loud complaints, and to accompany them with rude remarks to the Princesses, while, by their unguarded conversation, they constantly interfered with the negotiations for the liberation of the whole party.

On one occasion, for instance, when a second of the captives felt that she was near the period of her confinement, this woman determined to make an attempt to regain her native land. She invented an ingenious excuse, well calculated to have an effect upon the avaricious Zaidette, saying that she was always very dangerously ill on these occasions, and that this time she felt convinced she should not recover—that her only wish was to die in her native land, and that Shamil had nothing to gain by forcing her to expire in his seraglio. In addition to this, she called attention to the fact that her son, a boy of six, would remain with Shamil as her hostage. Zaidette was led away by these representations, promised to use her influence with Shamil, and the next day seriously announced that the woman's ransom had

been fixed at a thousand roubles*, and that if she had any chance of collecting that sum she could return to her native land. The servant was almost wild with joy, and seemed to fancy that nothing would be easier than to collect the thousand roubles and redeem her son, who was to remain at Dargi-Vedenno until the amount was paid.

Unfortunately, she did not know how to count, and the Princesses endeavoured in vain to convince her that a woman in her position would have some trouble in procuring so large a sum, and that her husband unassisted would not even be able to pay a hundred roubles. But the foolish woman would listen to nothing. She thought the Princesses' remonstrances proceeded from an unwillingness to see her released, and at last said to the Princess Chavchavadzey,—

"I did not expect this from you, Princess. Of what use am I to you?" she added, in a tone of despair.

"God help you!" answered the Princess, "we do not wish to keep you here; we only wish you not to deceive yourself. Now, where can you possibly get a thousand roubles?"

"Will not Nina Alexandrovna† help me?" inquired the servant.

"Nina Alexandrovna will probably give up all she possesses; but it will be for all of us together, and not for you alone."

"Well, then, the Princess Ekaterina Alexandrovna?‡ All Mingrelia belongs to her."

* About 166 pounds.

† The widow of Gribaiedoff, and sister of Prince Chavchavadzey.

‡ Another of Prince Chavchavadzey's sisters.

The Princesses did not know what to do to quiet this senseless woman. Shamil's interpreters were listening and recording every word she said; and it was feared that her indiscreet remarks would have the effect of making Shamil reject any reasonable sum that might be offered as a ransom. These fears were in fact realised. Shamil's spies discovered that the Princess of Mingrelia was a relation of the captives; and this was made a pretext for persisting in the demand of five millions, which was now again mentioned in the seraglio as the smallest ransom that could be accepted.

Soon afterwards, to the great grief of all the servants, but this time to the great satisfaction of the Princesses, the complaints of the woman just mentioned and of the wounded nurse (for whom the rest of the captives had inconvenienced themselves considerably during their journey through the mountains) caused Shamil to interfere. The orders which the Iman had issued once before were now fulfilled to the letter; and all the servants were removed from the seraglio into the *aoul*, with the exception of the two wet nurses, George Orbeliani's nurse, and the little Georgian girl.

The Princesses had now plenty of space and plenty of air in their apartment, which previously had been crowded to excess and uncomfortable in every respect. They were no longer threatened by disagreeable and even dangerous scenes with their own attendants, but they were rendered very anxious upon another point. They imagined that their servants must now be subjected to all kinds of privations and ill treatment, and inquired after them so constantly that at last they were allowed

to receive visits from them. Once, too, Shouanette obtained permission for the Princesses to go out into the *aoul*, in order to see how they lived, and to judge for themselves whether they were ill treated or not. Just before this permission was granted, Daniel-Sultan, who had been an intimate friend of Prince Chavchavadzey's father, arrived; and the captives suspected that a desire expressed by him to see them, had also a considerable effect in procuring them this excursion.

The Princesses and their children left the seraglio accompanied by Shamil's daughter and all the female servants of the seraglio, and at the gate of the outer court were surrounded by armed men with sabres drawn. This precaution, however, was not directed against the captives, but against the populace, who might have insulted them as they passed through the *aoul*.

During the walk the Princesses did not see much, as their faces were covered, and twilight was coming on. They could only observe that there was a great movement in the crowded streets, and noticed in particular one dark little hut with an awning, which, they were informed, contained the militiamen and the two Princes.

The Princesses found their servants in as comfortable a position as could be expected. Having satisfied themselves on that point, they did not remain long, as the open air and the exercise, to both of which they were now quite unaccustomed, had made them very tired, and they were anxious to get "home" and take a little rest. The walk had altogether occupied half an hour.

Soon after this excursion there was great excitement

in the seraglio. Shamil was preparing to go out on a campaign; but before he started, Kazi-Machmat was to set off at the head of a separate detachment. Accordingly, in the midst of all the bustle, Aminette was busier than any one, and was employed night and day cutting out and sewing portions of the young man's uniform. At last the hour of the departure arrived. Kazi-Machmat rode out of the seraglio in a white *papach* * and a white cloak bearing an ornamental design in saffron or some other yellow dye. In the outer court, shots of salutation were fired in his honour. A standard was unfurled by the side of the young commander, and the detachment set off chanting "*Lia-illiahi-il-Allah.*" At the same time all the women ran towards the partition, to look through the crevices at the departing cavalcade.

On the evening of that day, the Princess Chavchavadzey went out to sit in the gallery. The other captives were not disposed to take the air, and remained in the room. Looking towards Aminette's room, the Princess was astonished to see some one lying down on the floor. Advancing towards the apartment, she discovered that this was Aminette herself, who appeared to be in a terrible state of dejection.

"What are you thinking about so gravely?" said the Princess to her sad little friend.

"I am waiting for my brother. It is dull. We are provided with everything, and yet there appears to be something wanting. Zaidette is very unkind. . . . . Really I should like to go away from here."

* The Circassian cap.

"But has Kazi-Machmat gone away for long?" asked the Princess, guessing the true cause of Aminette's sorrow.

"At first Shamil meant to go himself, but now he has sent *him* instead. They always do that," continued Aminette, lowering her eyebrows and pouting her pretty red lips. Then she endeavoured to change the conversation in order to avoid mentioning the real origin of her grief. But her feelings constantly betrayed her; and in spite of herself she recurred perpetually to the one subject which occupied her thoughts.

"The Russians are attacking us again," recommenced Aminette.* "When and how will all this terminate?" she continued. "Will all our people return?" and so forth.

The Princess tried in vain to give another direction to her thoughts.

Two days afterwards a messenger arrived on horseback from Kazi-Machmat, and Shamil himself began to get ready for the campaign. The two eldest wives were exceedingly busy. Zaidette was cool in the midst of the bustle; but Shouanette could not conceal her despair at her husband's departure.

"It seems as if our affairs were going badly indeed when they send for Shamil himself," she said to the captives.

* Aminette, by constantly talking with the Princesses, had at length learnt to speak the Georgian language fluently.

† Major-General Baron Wrangel, assisted by Colonel, now Major-General Baklanoff, had just made a daring movement beyond the Argoun, near the heights of Goitekortsk (in September, 1854).

At last Shamil was quite ready for his departure. A white horse with crimson caparisons was brought into the courtyard, and the Iman appeared in a tunic of brown cloth lined with black fur. He wore coloured shoes and tightly fitting gaiters edged with narrow braid. He had neither gold nor silver on any part of his costume, and was too much an enemy of luxury to wear the slightest ornament. On his head he wore a white *chalma** over his *papach*, the crown of which was red, with a small black tassel at the top. The ends of the *chalma* hung loose down his back.

In this costume, and seated on his beautiful white horse, Shamil looked magnificent, and even imposing. All his family, his servants, and the children of the captives, accompanied him to the gates; but as soon as he had passed through they were closed, and he was seen no more by the inhabitants of the seraglio.

After Shamil's departure the first remarkable change in the life of the captives was a great deterioration in the quality, and a great diminution in the quantity of the food supplied to them. Sometimes for three or four days together the mean Zaidette would leave them the same meat and bread, and when at length she did send them a fresh supply, it was insufferably bad. In addition to this the cold weather was coming on, and there was a great draught through the little open window in their room, while to close it up would have been to bury themselves in utter darkness.

* The *papach* is the Circassian cap, and the *chalma* is a kind of turban folded round the crown.

It has already been said that in the windows of all the rooms in the *seraglio*, except Shamil's cabinet in the detached building, and the apartments of his wives, paper supplied the place of glass. Sheets of paper were now pasted into the window of the Princesses' room; but though this excluded the cold air, it made the room very dark. The children were constantly crying; and when they were taken outside into the snow, with nothing on their feet, they naturally caught cold and were laid up. This state of things continued for about a fortnight. The ill-constructed stove, it should be mentioned, gave out such a heat that neither the children nor the grown-up persons could bear it. In addition to all this, the Princess Orbeliani took cold and was for some time seriously ill.

On one occasion Shouanette invited the Princess Chavchavadzey to drink tea with her. During the evening the Princess asked whether Shouanette had heard of Shamil, and whether there was any news of the movements of the army.

"As yet nothing certain is known," replied Shouanette. "I am uneasy about this campaign; it lasts too long. They have already been gone two weeks. Shamil has sent for the steward to join him; and Hadjio goes away to-morrow. It is very melancholy," she sighed, in conclusion.

During this conversation Zaidette entered, sat down, and herself began to talk to the Princess; but now, none but unimportant subjects were discussed, though the cunning Tartar woman constantly brought forward her favourite topic.

"Well; how do your affairs go on?" she inquired of the Princess (though she knew how they were going on much better than the captives themselves). "What do you reckon upon now? Will your government help you?"

"A ransom from the government is out of the question; with us every man must take care of his own family. We have suffered from our own carelessness, and must bear the penalty ourselves," answered the Princess with caution.

"Shamil says the government ought to reward your husband for his brave defence of Shildy," urged Zaidette (whose remarks were translated by Shouanette).

"There is a proverb in Russian," said the Princess, "to the effect that 'God is high, and the Emperor far away;' and, moreover, there are numerous examples in our army of such bravery as my husband displayed at Shildy. With us the cowards only are remarked. It is impossible to distinguish the brave; for all are brave."

Shouanette interrupted this conversation when she saw how disagreeable it was becoming to the Princess.

"Come, tell us something about your husband," she said. "What sort of a disposition has he? and what kind of life did you lead at home?"

The Princess related all that she considered would be intelligible to these women of the mountains, spoke of her lost happiness, of the harmony in which her family lived, and altogether did her best to interest them. With regard to her fortune, she expressed herself as follows:—

"Our fortune consisted in land, and on its produce

we lived. We received a great many visitors, and were considered rich, but never had much money."

The Princess spoke in this manner because she was aware that they were ignorant of the great value of land, and did not suspect for an instant that it could be converted into money.

The Princess's words were listened to with much attention; at last Shouanette sighed and said,—

"I cannot understand what men want? Why do they go to war when they might remain peaceably at home with their own families?"

The Princess does not remember how this conversation terminated.

Towards night the steward Hadjio, as he made his usual round with a lantern, calling at the same time upon all the inmates to answer to their names, entered the Princesses' apartment. He informed them that he was going to join Shamil, he knew not for how long, and that when the campaign was over, Shamil intended to visit all the *aouls* to teach the inhabitants the Shariat.*

The captives said that for their part they should be very glad when Shamil returned, for that the last emissaries from Hassaff-Yourt, after asking him in vain for an answer to their proposition, were now remaining idle at Dargi-Vedenno.

Hadjio promised to mention this to the Iman as soon as he saw him.

The messengers from Hassaff-Yourt had brought

* The Shariat and Adat are the sacred books of the Caucasus. The latter contains precepts and laws; while the former treats of doctrines.

presents to Shamil's wives, and to his father-in-law the venerable Djemmal-Eddin. The wives' presents consisted of pieces of satin for dresses; the old man received a magnificent rosary and some muslin for a *chalma*, of a much finer fabric than can be procured in Chechni.

In the first instance these presents were all forwarded to the Princesses, who afterwards invited Shamil's wives to their apartment and entrusted the gifts to them. Zaidette was exceedingly pleased, but lost no time in remarking that the third piece, which was intended for Aminette, was too good for her, and that she should not have it. She added at the same time that she was not *really* his wife, and so forth.

In consequence of Zaidette's objection, it was proposed that the third piece of satin should be divided among Shamil's daughters. But as nothing decisive could be done during the Iman's absence, the three pieces were carried into his room, to remain there until his return. Aminette was seriously offended, and was so angry that for two days the captives saw nothing of her. When she visited them again, she did nothing but utter complaints (for which there was certainly some foundation) of the hardness of her fate, and the injustice of the eldest wives.

"I will go away," she said. "I will not continue to live here. They have all dresses and fine things; I alone have nothing."

"But you should ask Shamil, when he returns, to interfere. He will surely not refuse to see that justice is done you," remarked the Princesses.

"*Ask?* No, I could not do that."

The useless pride on the part of the wild young girl amused the Princesses; but it showed such a noble disposition, and she looked so beautiful all the time, that the captives could not help loving her all the more. Besides, she was almost as much a captive in Shamil's seraglio as they themselves.

Nothing remarkable took place before Shamil's return, except that, during his absence, there was general disorder throughout the seraglio, giving evident signs that the ruling power was away. This was the explanation of Zaidette's ill treatment of Aminette, and it will also account for the mischievous conduct in which Machmat-Shabi indulged during the same period. Having nothing to do throughout the day, he devoted himself to all kinds of tricks for the annoyance of the other residents in the seraglio. Thus, he broke the lock on the door of his grandmother's room, smashed the glass of the window, and at other times lighted pieces of wood and threw them into the courtyard, by which means he once very nearly set the seraglio on fire. No one had the least power over the mischievous boy; his father alone could govern him, and Shamil was absent.

In the meantime Oscar, one of Prince David's servants, arrived in Dargi-Vedenno with letters — the same faithful Oscar who, during the critical period of the engagement at Shildy, had not left his master's side for a single moment. But he was not allowed to see the Princesses, nor were his letters given to them. All he could do was to wait for Shamil's return.

However, some of the female captives in the *aoul* were so imprudent as to go out to see him. Zaidette

discovered this, and as a punishment put a stop to their visiting the Princesses.

At last Shamil returned, but neither joyfully nor with the least ceremony. His dull, irritable humour told every one in the seraglio that his campaign had not been successful; and his state of mind soon had a direct effect upon the captives. In the first place they were not allowed to see Oscar; and afterwards they were informed, on the part of Shamil, that, as the Iman had not obtained a satisfactory answer from their relatives, all correspondence between them and the captives must cease until some positive information was received with respect to the return of his son.

The next day Indris came to the Princesses and asked them whether there was no one to whom they could address a petition for the fulfilment of Shamil's conditions besides their relatives, as the latter had already declined to make the necessary efforts. The Princesses replied that they had no one but their relatives to interest themselves about them. The enraged Indris then said to them, with undisguised satisfaction,—

"You don't wish to take any trouble about the matter? Well, then, don't complain if they treat you badly."

"It is useless to threaten us," said the Princesses. "We cannot do anything ourselves while we are remaining here; and if the Chechnians do not understand that, how is it that you, who were formerly a Russian soldier, can so far have forgotten the Russian laws as to think that it is in our power to act contrary to the will and orders of the Emperor?"

Indris was offended at this inquiry.

"I am not a Russian, I am a mountaineer," he replied. "Shamil only sent me to Russia to learn as much as possible."

"You may tell that to our servants; but we cannot believe anything so absurd."

Indris made no answer. At last he said to the captives,—

"Well, then, write to any one you like."

The Princesses wrote to Prince David, to Lieutenant-General Prince Orbeliani, and to the Flugel-adjutant Colonel Baron Nicolai. Indris took the letters to Shamil, but returned a few minutes after he had received them, and said,—

"They will not do; write others."

The Princess Chavchavadzey took the rejected communications, threw them into the fire, and said, angrily,—

"Very well, I shall not write any more."

Then the Princess Orbeliani took up the pen and began a fresh letter; but this was also returned by Shamil with a command to write in a different style.

Just then Hassan and Mohammed, the emissaries from Hassaff-Yourt, entered the room. They sat down on the ground and began as follows.

"I have come here a number of times," said Hassan; "but our business does not advance in the least."

"I am an invalid," added Mohammed. "I have a great deal of difficulty in getting to Vedenno, and I meet with no success. They are dissatisfied with me here, and at Hassaff-Yourt also, and all because your relatives act

with so little energy. But if they can do nothing, can you not do something on your own account?"

This speech of Mohammed's was so adverse to the interests of the Princesses, that they at once determined it must have been dictated by Shamil.

The Princess Chavchavadzey said in reply,—

"You, who have been chosen by Baron Nicolai to act for us, know the position of affairs far better than we can do; why then do you address questions to us?"

Mohammed answered with perfect calmness,—

"You will do no good by getting angry; you had better think of something more useful."

"I repeat that our relatives are doing their best, and certainly will give for our ransom all they can collect. Accordingly, we have nothing to write to them as far as that matter is concerned."

To this the hypocritical Tartars answered,—

"As you like, write or don't write, it makes no difference; only remember that no more intercourse or communication will pass between you and your relatives, and that this is the last time you will see us."

"So much the better," said the Princess Chavchavadzey; "the less we hear from you, the less uneasy we are made."

Mohammed and Hassan rose and departed.

In the meantime the Princess Orbeliani had prepared a third and corrected edition of the letters to the Princess and Baron Nicolai.

Indris, however, brought them back a third time, and now said explicitly,—

"You must write to the Empress."

"We dare not, we have no right to do so."

"Now I will convict you of trifling with Shamil," exclaimed Indris, joyfully. "You promised to act openly with him, and to obey his orders; and now you have both deceived and disobeyed him. You will only have yourselves to thank if you are punished for it."

"How have we deceived Shamil?" asked the captives.

"In this way. You pretend you have no right to address the Empress, whereas in Tsenondahl we found your badges, which show that you were the Empress's ladies of honour, and we know that the ladies of honour can always communicate directly with the Sovereign."

"But we do not know where the Empress is. She often goes to warm climates, and is probably not in St. Petersburgh," answered the Princesses. They then endeavoured to explain to him that they could not and dared not apply to the Empress.

Indris at last seemed to be convinced, and said,—

"If you do not like to apply to the Empress, then write to Prince Vorontsoff."

The Princess did not know how to avoid this suggestion, put as it was, in the form of an *ultimatum*, and finally consented to write a letter, at the dictation of this renegade Russian soldier, to the former Governor of the Caucasus, Prince Vorontsoff. The captives blushed when they read what they had written; so low and humiliating were the words which had been dictated to them. But they had no choice in the matter, and could only submit to what was peremptorily forced upon them.

Indris returned again with the letter, but only to say that this time the communication had met with Shamil's approval. He then left the letter in the Princess's room. As he went away Indris was suddenly seized with a desire to terrify the prisoners in the *aoul*, and with this view he entered the hut where the Princesses' servants were confined, and said to them,—

"Do you know that your mistresses have rebelled against Shamil, and that he has ordered them to be beheaded?" One of them, Varvara, on hearing these words fell senseless to the ground, and remained in that state for several hours.

Soon after this, Zaidette, Shouanette, Hadji-Rebil, and a number of the servants of the seraglio came to the Princesses' apartments.

"I am astonished!" began Zaidette, "that you, a prisoner—and with whom? with Shamil!—so obstinately refuse to do as you are ordered. How is it you do not fear him?"

The Princess replied that she feared no one but God,—an answer which called forth a torrent of abuse.

"What unheard-of impudence!" screamed Zaidette.

"The Iman is a saint!" screamed still more loudly Hadji-Rebil. "Who dares to disobey his holy commands?"

"He may be holy," said the Princess, unable to contain herself; "but he cannot give me back my lost child."

A frightful disturbance now took place; but the Princesses addressing Shouanette, who had been a silent spectator of all that had taken place, said to her,—

"Tell that woman to go away from here."

Shouanette led Hadji-Rebil out of the room, and on her return advised the Princesses to be calmer and more guarded in their remarks.

"But why do they accuse us of contumacy when we do exactly as we are ordered? They required us to write certain letters, and we wrote them," said the Princess Orbeliani.

Shouanette took the letter which had been left with the captives by Indris, and gave it herself to Shamil, in consequence of which they were allowed on the following day to see Oscar.

The interview took place in a very strange manner. The captives were taken towards the entrance and stationed at a short distance from it. When the gates were opened, they saw Oscar standing a few steps on the other side, and surrounded by Murids with their carbines pointed at him.

The Princesses could not understand the meaning of these precautions, and said to Oscar,—

Probably you have said or done something you ought not, as you are surrounded this way by guards.

"I have neither said nor done any thing of the kind," answered Oscar, who was a young man about nineteen or twenty, of Tartar origin, but brought up in Prince Chavchavadzey's family, where he had been in service since his childhood.

It was evident from Oscar's tone that he was offended at the conduct of the mountaineers. The Princesses asked him about their relatives, and inquired how the negotiations were getting on.

Oscar informed them that Prince Chavchavadzey had

long since written about Shamil's son, but that he did not expect a decisive answer before a month. Oscar did his best to encourage and console the Princesses, who were much pleased by the straightforward arguments of their servant, proving, as they did, that he was not in the least daunted by the menaces of the Murids who were surrounding him.

It is worthy of remark that Oscar at first was unable to recognise the Princesses, so thin and pale had they become, both from physical exhaustion and from grief.

CHAP. VI.

Now that Shamil had returned from his campaign, neither the mischievous conduct of Machmat-Shabi, nor the affair of the piece of silk in which Aminette had been so much injured, remained without their consequences. Machmat-Shabi was placed under arrest in the room next the captives (the children of the Iman cannot be subjected to corporal punishment); and in the matter of the silk dresses it was decided that Aminette had been treated with injustice, and that the three pieces should for the present remain at Shamil's disposal in his own cabinet. Zaidette endeavoured to exculpate herself in the Iman's eyes by pretending that, as he objected to see his wives luxuriously dressed, she had considered it best to reserve the piece of silk for his daughters. Soon afterwards the Princess saw the rosary which had been sent to Djemmal-Eddin on Zaidette's arm. The honest old man did not wish to accept the present until he had done something to facilitate the release of the Princesses, and in the meanwhile entrusted the rosary to Shamil. But Zaidette took possession of it, pretending to her father that it had been given to her by Shamil, and to Shamil that it had been given to her by her father.

Soon after Shamil's return the corpse of one of his Naibs was brought to Vedenno. He had been killed in a recent battle with the Russians; and in exchange for his body one of the captives from Kahetia was set at liberty. This affair had been managed by the Princess Chavchavadzey, who at the request of Shamil wrote a special letter on the subject to Baron Nicolai. The Naib was buried at Vedenno, and was honoured with a grand funeral, at which Shamil was present.

Shamil, much pleased at the effect of the Princess's very natural application, proposed that she should have an interview with her husband. The Princess was informed that Prince David would be allowed to come to Dargi-Vedenno, and return freely to Hassaff-Yourt. But she declined the proposal, though it was made and even pressed upon her on several occasions, through the interpreters, through Hadjio, through Zaidette, and through Shouanette. At one time Shouanette said to the Princesses,—

"It is a pity you refuse this offer. Shamil sees that you are sad, and wishes to comfort you."

"I know," answered the Princess, "that a strange man is not allowed to enter the seraglio; and to see my husband as Aminette sees her brother, through the crevice of the partition, is not what I should wish."

"Oh, they will arrange matters differently for you," persisted Shouanette. "They will take your husband into Shamil's cabinet."

But the Princess positively declined the offer. She did not wish to encounter the pain of a fresh separation,

and was moreover afraid her husband might be detained in captivity.

Nevertheless, a similar proposal was made to Prince David, through Hassan; but he refused it, saying "that he would accept permission to go to Vedenno if he thought affairs could be terminated at once, and that he could return with his wife, his sister, and his children; but that, as this was out of the question, he had no wish for an interview which must end with a distressing separation."

After the Princess's conversation on the subject with Shouanette, the proposition of an interview was not renewed.

Several days passed, until, one afternoon when the captives were at dinner, Hadjio entered and informed them that some "unknown person" had arrived at Vedenno, and was asking to see them. The Princesses, instead of being pleased, were only disturbed by the news of this arrival. They imagined it must be Prince David, who had accepted Shamil's invitation; and it was with much alarm that they proceeded to the gates, where the people of the seraglio were drawn up in a line waiting for them to be opened. They were at last thrown back; and the captives beheld some person, who was indeed unknown to them, with his face enveloped in black. The captives and the mysterious visitor looked at one another silently; and the gates closed. Similar scenes occurred several times afterwards; and the Princesses could never ascertain their meaning or who the persons were to whom they were exhibited in so strange a manner. It is supposed, however, that they were the deputies of the

people, who wished to be assured that the captives were still safe, and with them the large ransom which they represented, and on which the people in general had a claim.

The following day was full of incidents of a more or less interesting character.

In the first place Machmat-Shabi, as a punishment for some fresh piece of mischief, was sent away to pursue his studies in a distant province.

Then, by order of Shamil, and in consequence of the extreme coldness of the weather, the window in the prisoners' room was fitted up with glass.

Speaking generally, it is impossible to deny that Shamil took great care of his captives; and this was especially shown in the attention he paid to their accommodation now that the winter was becoming severe. After the glass had been put into the window, he ordered the fireplace to be rebuilt, and, when the work had been finished, inspected it himself, to see that it had been executed according to his orders. Before he entered the apartment, the Princesses were taken out into another room, in order that they might not meet the holy man (upon whose face the Christian women were not worthy to look). In examining the fireplace, Shamil found a saucepan full of water with a few onions floating in it, and was surprised to find what a miserable dinner was being prepared for them. He flew into a violent passion, called for Zaidette, reproached her with her meanness, and went away much displeased. Half an hour afterwards Shouanette came in with tea, butter, rice, and all that could be got ready for them in so short a time.

Shouanette told them that Shamil had reproached Zaidette most energetically, and that he had said to her, "How dare you act in a manner contrary to my wishes, and disobey my express orders?"

But about this time an incident of a far more interesting nature occupied the captives. The Princesses observed an unusual state of excitement in the seraglio. The women were running to and fro; the steward was walking up and down the courtyard and communicating to every one he met some piece of intelligence which appeared to be of a most gratifying nature. A little while afterwards the report of firearms was heard in the outer court, and Shamil himself rode out in great state from the gates.

The captives ascertained that all this joy was caused by the arrival of an envoy from the Sultan, who brought the news that his sovereign had overcome the Russians, and that the Turkish army had conquered fifty governments from the Czar. The Sultan's ambassador at the same time announced that he was empowered to offer to Shamil the title of "Viceroy of Georgia," on condition that the latter would assist him in his war against the infidels.

The Princesses of course knew how to regard these absurd statements, but they were careful not to express any opinion about them, and when the news was communicated to them they simply replied,—

"So much the worse for us; it may interfere with our liberation."

Soon afterwards Shamil received better news still. A mountaineer, probably one of Shamil's spies, came to

Vedenno with the intelligence that his son, Djemmal-Eddin, had decided to return to the Caucasus. Shamil rewarded the news-bearer most liberally, though he at the same time did not quite believe his statement. Wishing to obtain some confirmation of its truth, he called Shah-Abbas to him and consulted him about it.

The wily Armenian, understanding that the father's heart wished for consolation as a child wishes for a toy, replied that there could be no doubt about his son's return, and that he, Shah-Abbas, was ready to answer for it with his head.

Shamil upon this presented Shah-Abbas with a magnificent horse.

A great commotion now again took place inside the seraglio, but it was soon put an end to by preparations for the departure of Shamil, who was going out on a fresh campaign.

The departure took place in the same style as on a previous occasion; but the scene of action* was much nearer, and was in fact close to Vedenno, for in the evening the sound of cannon was heard in the seraglio. It may be imagined what a sensation was created! Shouanette was more agitated than any one. She prayed, refused to eat, and altogether suffered very much. It was said that Shamil had given orders, in case of his defeat and the advance of the Russians, to remove his wives, his children, and the captives. Upon this occasion Zaidette said to the captives,—

* This was the affair at Isti-Sou, at which Baron Nicolai commanded, when Shamil lost upwards of four hundred men.

"Don't flatter yourselves with the hope that the Russians will come here and release you; for the first thing we should do would be to cut all your throats."

The Princesses did not doubt for one moment the sincerity of this promise, but coolly answered,—

"We have been prepared for that from the first moment of our captivity, and we would much rather die than remain here for ever."

The excitement in the seraglio continued for some time, and it was increased by an earthquake which occurred about the same period. The shocks were so violent and so continuous that the seraglio certainly could not have withstood them if it had been loftier, or built of stone instead of wood.

When the danger was over, Zaidette asked the captives whether they ever had earthquakes at home. They replied that they had, but that they were less violent.

"And with us they are also less violent generally," rejoined Zaidette; "and what the present one is to be attributed to we are at a loss to imagine. Surely it is God's anger!" continued the superstitious Tartar woman.

"For your treatment to us," thought the Princesses, who however took care not to express what was passing in their minds.

Shamil sent occasionally to inquire how his daughter Najabat and the Princess Chavchavadzey's little boy were getting on; and the Princess was informed by the messenger that her husband was in the field in command of a detachment of "white Cossacks." But she did not believe this, as she knew the Prince had no separate command; and from the description of the person at the

head of the "white Cossacks," she recognised Colonel Edlinsky, commanding the Cossack regiment of Mosdok.

Shamil was absent nearly two months. At last he came back, but at night, without any formal reception, without salutes, and even without any attendants except Selim. In the seraglio too all was quiet; in fact there were no manifestations of joy of any kind at his return. This caused them to suspect that the Iman had been either wounded or defeated by the Russians. This last supposition proved correct. Selim related to the captives how Shamil and himself had had to ride for their lives, and had only succeeded in escaping by separating themselves from the ordinary escort. On one occasion, near the Russian frontier, Shamil had turned to him and said, —

"I have long thought you would not be sorry to desert to the Russians, if you only had the opportunity. Now you can do so if you like. You can leave me and run away without the least fear of being followed."

But Selim, who did not wish to leave his children, preferred to remain with Shamil, though it will be seen that he afterwards forsook him, in order to follow one of the prisoners, of whom he had become desperately enamoured.

Soon after Shamil, arrived Kazi-Machmat, who was received with the usual honours. The captives observed that he was lame; but it was explained to them that this was caused by the opening of an old wound, and not by a new one.

Shamil had returned from his campaign on the 23rd

of December, two days before Christmas day, when he found Gramoff the interpreter waiting for him.

Gramoff was attached to Prince Gregory Orbeliani, and had been intrusted with the direction of the negotiations for the liberation of the captives. The Princesses did not see him, but they received several presents which he had brought to them from their relatives.

A wounded corporal who had been brought in was placed in the visitors' room, and remained there a considerable time together with Kazi-Machmat.

In the meanwhile the life of the captives had become more and more dull, owing to the general depression which had been caused throughout the seraglio by the discomfiture of Shamil's forces, and by the setting in of the cold weather, which was now felt most severely. Shamil's wives now visited them but rarely, with the exception of Aminette, whose innocence and *naïveté* interested them much. She had already quarrelled once with Zaidette since Shamil's return, and told the captives that she was very glad Shamil had taken the presents, as now they would be given to no one. On another occasion she informed them that she had complained of Zaidette to Kazi-Machmat, and had threatened to run away from the seraglio with her brother, unless Shamil interfered on her behalf, and prevented the humiliation to which she was subjected by his eldest wife. From that time, she said, Shamil had behaved more amiably towards her, and had even said that, if she wished to return to her native land, he would not detain her. Aminette rejoiced at her success; but she was unaware

at the time that her brother was never to visit her again, and that Shamil had issued positive orders to that effect. It was thus the irritability and innocence of Aminette were taken advantage of. Nevertheless she was sometimes able to pay her persecutors in their own coin. The following may serve as a specimen of her behaviour towards Shamil himself.

One evening, when it was late, the Princesses went out into the gallery of their room in order to enjoy the pure air of the moonlit winter night. Aminette went with them, when suddenly Shamil appeared. He was dressed in a white *shouba*, and he was going from his own room to Aminette's. Perceiving this, and without saying a word, the young girl concealed herself beneath the bench on which the captives were sitting. At last Shamil returned from her apartment, and walked up and down the gallery, as if waiting for her to come out of some of the other rooms; but as she did not appear he locked the door, took out the key, and concealed himself behind one of the corners of his residence.

Thus, for a considerable time, the illustrious saint, the powerful Iman of Chechni and Daghestan, waited freezing in the cold, like an ardent and not particularly saintlike young man, for the sake of a love-meeting with a girl of seventeen. At last the severity of the night, and the evident inutility of waiting any longer, made him return to his own apartments.

During the whole of this scene the position of the captives was most perilous. It can be imagined how dearly they would have had to pay for having helped to conceal the wife of the Iman, more especially as they had been the

involuntary witnesses of his amusing nocturnal adventure. But fortunately their presence in the gallery was not observed; and after she had been a few minutes behind the bench, Aminette slipped away, saying, as she left,—

"Ah! he has begun to watch me! This is all through Zaidette and her stories. Well, let him believe her!"

She then went to Napicette's room, and passed the night there.

The Princesses were afraid that Aminette would find herself in disgrace; but the next day Kazi-Machmat produced a reconciliation between his father and the independent young wife.

A few days after the occurrence of this scene a fire broke out in the Princesses' room. One of the beams adjoining the chimney burst into flames; the apartment was soon full of smoke, and the captives had to seek safety in the gallery. Much excitement was caused throughout the seraglio; and the cook who was in the habit of preparing the prisoners' meals ran outside to call for assistance. Selim soon made his appearance with an axe, and, by cutting away the burning embers, put a stop to all possibility of the conflagration spreading. The Princesses expected to hear some complaints on the subject of this accident; but Shamil has wood in abundance, and it was probably owing to that fact that the mishap called forth no severe comments.

The captives had been for some time without news from home, when one morning a letter was brought to them from Prince Gregory Orbeliani. This letter informed them that their relatives had written to St. Petersburgh in reference to Shamil's son, and his proposed return

to the mountains, and that affairs were beginning to look promising. In reply, the Princesses were only allowed to write that they were alive and well.

From this time Shamil was constantly receiving news from one person or another on the subject of his son's return. He was certainly well served by his spies; and it was astonishing how correct all the information they brought to him afterwards proved to be.

At last a mountaineer arrived at Dargi-Vedenno stating that Djemmal-Eddin had reached Stavropol.

This intelligence was received in the most enthusiastic manner, with much firing, shouting, and embracing; but the Princesses, to whom the news was quite as agreeable as to the mountaineers, could scarcely believe it until it was confirmed by Mohammed and Hassan, who arrived soon afterwards from Hassaf-Yourt. Mohammed at the same time assured them that several of Shamil's emissaries had actually seen him at Stavropol. Shouanette came in the most impetuous manner to congratulate the prisoners, upon which Zaidette, who followed her, remarked, —

"It is very strange you should run to them with so much delight. What is there to be so pleased about? Has Shamil only one son?"

Zaidette was prompted to utter these observations by a desire to conceal from the captives the high value which was set upon Djemmal-Eddin in the seraglio. She was at the same time annoyed that every one seemed to overlook the claims of her crooked little daughter, who appeared to be the only person in the world for whom she entertained any real affection.

CHAP. VII.

ISAAC GRAMOFF arrived at Vedenno at about the same time as Shamil when he returned from his second campaign. The captives had calculated their time day by day, from the 4th of July, and on Christmas day they remember that two of the children were taken out to visit Gramoff, who was staying in the house of Hadjio the steward. Gramoff, who did not see the Princesses during his stay at Vedenno, went away bearing instructions from Shamil, to the effect that no one was to visit them again until the arrival of Djemmal-Eddin at Hassaff-Yourt.

Shouanette, now that Shamil had returned, began to visit the captives frequently as before. She was very anxious for information respecting European habits and manners, and spoke to the Princesses of the dresses, bonnets, and cloaks she had been in the habit of seeing the Russian ladies wear at Mosdok. She also took a great interest in the progress of the war with the allies.

"During the Christmas week," said Shouanette, "all was life and gaiety, and everybody went to pay visits of congratulation to everybody else; but here our existence is always equally monotonous."

Shouanette was frequently present when the captives were at prayers, and on two occasions joined in their devotions.

On one occasion when alone with the Princesses, she related to them the chief incidents of her life, which were as follows: —

"I was taken captive," she said, "with my relations; and Shamil refused to accept a ransom for them, except on condition of my remaining. I consented to sacrifice myself for my family, and lived with Shamil's late wife for three years. During that period every exertion was made to convert me to Islamism; but I was not forced. I persisted in not abjuring my own religion; but at last I got to know Shamil, and for love of him consented to everything. At present I am happy, but I sometimes cannot help regretting ——"

Here Shouanette hesitated, as if ashamed to finish her remark.

"Regretting," she continued, "that Shamil will not allow us to dress better."

In the meantime the negotiations for the liberation of the Kahetian peasantry and the ordinary prisoners were going on; but not one was restored to freedom without the occurrence of some painful incident. It appeared to be part of the system to make the position of the captives so unendurable that they were compelled to call upon their relatives to ransom them, however exorbitant the sums demanded. The unfortunate peasants were kept in deep pits, and so poorly fed that some of them nearly died of starvation. Shamil, it is true, was not to blame

for this inhuman treatment, which had its origin in the avaricious natures of Zaidette and Hadjio, who, with all the apparent kindliness of his disposition, became grasping and cruel as soon as money was brought into the question.

When the turn of the daughter of the Kizishevi priest, her little sister, her two brothers, and her grandmother arrived, the relatives managed to send fifteen hundred roubles.* This sum had in all probability been collected only by the greatest exertions; but at the seraglio it was deemed insufficient. In vain the young girl implored her jailers to let her go, assuring them that her father and mother had been killed, and that she did not even know herself from whom and by what means the money for her ransom had been procured. At last, when there appeared to be no possibility of getting a larger sum, they consented to let the young girl depart, but insisted on keeping her little sister.

In her despair, she turned for assistance to the Princess Chavchavadzey, who prevailed upon Shouanette to intercede for her.

The only answer Shouanette could obtain was, that children without mothers were looked upon as sent by God in order to be received into the bosom of Islamism, but that in consideration of the Princess having nursed the little girl herself, she might take her, and that she should be liberated simultaneously with the Princesses.

* About 250*l.*

The young girl was consoled, but soon afterwards she was tormented by fresh demands for money, and in a state of distraction hanged herself. However, Labazan came into her room in time to save her, though by doing so he gained no thanks from the girl, who declared she would renew her attempt at the earliest opportunity.

In the midst of the excitement caused by this terrible incident, the wife of old Djemmal-Eddin came running to the spot. Shocked at the information she received, she hastened to her husband, who at once communicated all the particulars to Shamil. Thereupon the Iman ordered that all the family should be set at liberty immediately, with the exception of the Princess Chavchavadzey's little nursling, who remained with her protector.

After this it may be thought that all was terminated. But, no; Hadjio and Zaidette said it was necessary to equip the liberated captives for their journey, and called upon the prisoners in the *aoul* and in the seraglio to provide them with clothes and other necessaries. They had to remain three days longer in the *aoul*, during which time it occurred to Hadjio and Zaidette to ask this unhappy family for a loaf of sugar; and the captives did not hesitate to promise them two, on condition that they were allowed to set off at once.

The Touchian who came for the prisoners only brought half the ransom money with him. The rest was to be paid at the frontier; and accordingly Selim and several

armed men accompanied the captives on horseback, in order to receive it at the appointed place.

Selim had himself volunteered for this duty; and the Princesses, who had long suspected that he was in love with the minister's daughter, were now confirmed in that opinion. He in fact never returned to the mountains; and his wife, finding that she was deserted, filled the seraglio with her lamentations.

Escapes similar to that of Selim were said to be made often enough; but it was impossible to get away without great difficulty.

In the meantime Shamil's spies came in frequently with information respecting the movements of his son, who, it was stated, had been for the last twenty days at Stavropol, where he was in fact waiting for the arrival of Mouravieff, the new Governor of the Caucasus. Shamil soon afterwards was himself informed that a new governor-general was about to arrive at Stavropol, and "that it was not Prince Vorontsoff, nor any prince at all, but a general."

While waiting impatiently for his son to arrive at the frontier, Shamil proposed to the Princesses to send a messenger to Hassaff-Yourt to get medicine for little Alexander, who was still indisposed. He also offered to forward a letter for them to their relatives. Shouanette at the same time sent for a piece of shot silk for a chemise. The Princess Chavchavadzey wrote about this commission to her husband, and it was duly executed. The messenger returned with the piece of silk, but brought no news about Djemmal-Eddin, ex-

cept that he had left St. Petersburgh, and that he was expected in the Caucasus, though the period of his arrival was uncertain.

Shouanette was delighted with the piece of silk, and divided it with Zaidette. Aminette was again forgotten, and again took offence at the slight, and for some time abstained from visiting the Princesses.

When Shamil heard of the present his eldest wife had received, he was much displeased. He imagined the silk had been sent to the Princesses, and observed that it was not very delicate to deprive captives of stuff of which they probably had need themselves.

About this time Zaidette paid the prisoners a visit, and took occasion to say to them that Djemmal-Eddin's return would not have much effect in obtaining their liberation, that Shamil had other children, and, finally, that the Princesses would not in any case be set free for less than a million.

The Princesses replied that, if such were the final decision, they should have to remain in the seraglio as long as they lived, for that a million was a sum which it was quite impossible they could collect.

"You could not even count a million," said they.

A few days afterwards the prisoners heard that Hadjio was employed learning to count up to a million, and that, in the absence of money, he was practising with beans.

"But how is it," said Shouanette to them, when they were speaking to her about the ransom, "that my father was called a millionaire? If he was only a mer-

chant and had a million, surely a prince must possess far more."

The Princesses replied that the property of a merchant might consist entirely of money, but that all they possessed was land.

That land was convertible into money did not seem to occur to any of them.

About this time Shouanette's servant was married; and the proceedings were of too characteristic a nature to be passed over in silence.

In the morning she was dressed in holiday costume, her face was whitened, and all superfluous hairs were picked out of her eyebrows, so as to make them perfectly regular. She was then covered over with a large veil and placed in a separate room.

A number of women from the seraglio and from the *aoul* assembled, and employed themselves in cooking a variety of dishes, and in stuffing a mattress with hay, and a quilt and pillows with wool. The rest of the *trousseau* consisted of tin plates, a couple of kettles, some frying-pans, a metal dish, and a box filled with clothes. But the most magnificent part of the *trousseau* was unquestionably that which adorned the bride's own person.

As soon as it was dark the party, with the exception of the bride, assembled in Shouanette's room, took their seats on the floor, and proceeded to sup.

When the supper was over, the bride was led outside the gates to meet the bridegroom; but before she left the seraglio, Shamil went towards her and invoked a blessing on her head.

Two or three shots were fired as she passed through the outer court, and with that the ceremony appeared to terminate.

It was now the beginning of February; and it was reported that Djemmal-Eddin had already reached Vladi-Kavkas. A messenger, who was sent with a letter from the Princesses in order to ascertain the truth of this rumour, came back with the information that he had even arrived at Hassaff-Yourt.

The next thing Shamil had to do was to identify Djemmal-Eddin; and with this object he despatched to Hassaff-Yourt Younous (who had given him up when a child to General Grabbe at the siege of Ahoulgo), Hadjio, and Shah-Abbas the interpreter.

The Princesses heard that Djemmal-Eddin had arrived in Hassaff-Yourt on the 17th. Before the negotiations were brought to a conclusion, they demanded that Nina the nurse, who had been detained at Dido, the little child whom the Princess Chavchavadzey had nursed, and Thecla, the young girl who had been taken away by Zaidette, should be liberated simultaneously with themselves.

When the messengers returned from Hassaff-Yourt, they brought with them a letter from Djemmal-Eddin to his father. They said it was easy to see that he was Shamil's child, and that he was very intimate with Prince Chavchavadzey, and slept in the same room with him. Only one thing had displeased them. At an evening party at Hassaff-Yourt, he, the son of their Holy Iman, had absolutely danced with the wives of the Giaours! This the messengers had ascertained by

watching him into the ball-room, and then looking through the window. Zaidette told the Princesses that no good could come of this, and that Djemmal-Eddin might as well not come back at all; but the Princesses observed to her that Djemmal-Eddin would no doubt change, and live according to his father's wishes. Shouanette supported the Princesses; but Zaidette maintained that it would have been much better if Shamil, instead of asking for his son, had demanded a larger sum of money. The next morning Shouanette told them that Shamil had just been saying to her how glad he was she had not forgotten her Russian, as she would now be able to talk to Djemmal-Eddin, and that he should, in fact, give him up to her altogether. The Princesses were desired to write once more to their relatives, telling them to give as much money as possible, and that not Shamil, but the people, would never be contented with less than a million roubles. This the captives positively declined to do, saying that, after the manner in which their estates had been plundered, it would be absolutely impossible for their family to raise such a sum. Shamil hearing of this reply, said that the captives were not to be troubled any more, and that he would conclude the negotiations himself.

The prisoners were now treated with great attention; but it was still necessary for them to be very cautious in their remarks. Of this they had a proof one day when the Princess Baratoff happened to say of Shamil that, unless he kept his word on the subject of the ransom, his son would not form a very good opinion of him. The remark, which had been addressed to one of the

servants, was repeated with additions to Shouanette; and she was cautioning the captives against such observations when Hadji-Rebil the governess, who had also heard of the Princess Baratoff's speech, entered the room.

Hadji-Rebil was furious; nor did her anger diminish when she observed Shouanette in friendly conversation with the captives. She addressed some evidently offensive expressions to Shamil's favourite wife, and ended by pushing her.

The Princess Chavchavadzey could not conceal her just indignation. She desired Aminette to intimate to the insane Hadji-Rebil that she must instantly leave the room, or that she (the Princess) would find some opportunity of informing Shamil of the insults to which his wife was subjected; for it appeared that the other inmates of the seraglio were in the habit of reproaching Shouanette with having been a Christian, saying that it was for this reason she showed so much attention to the captives.

The Princess's words had their effect. Hadji-Rebil retired, dissimulating her rage; and Shouanette, little by little, was pacified.

Then the Princesses turned to Shouanette, begged her to consider her own happiness, and reminded her of the danger she incurred by coming so often into their room, as these visits never failed to excite the rage and fanaticism of her enemies. They entreated her not to think of them so much as, in her kindness, she was in the habit of doing; and Shouanette, acting upon this

advice, again allowed intervals of some length to occur between her visits.

They however renewed their intimacy with Aminette, who had quite forgotten her annoyance about the silk, and who now came to see them regularly every day. She assured the captives that she took the greatest pleasure in annoying Zaidette; and this appeared probable enough, for she constantly did so.

CHAP. VIII.

TOWARD the end of February (1855), Younous, Hadjio, and Shah-Abbas returned, for the second time, from Hassaff-Yourt, bringing with them a letter from Prince David Chavchavadzey, the contents of which were not communicated to the Princesses until some time afterwards.

The Princesses were much agitated at hearing nothing about the purport of this communication, especially as they received no letter at all themselves. The day after the arrival of the messengers, the Princess Chavchavadzey went to Shouanette, who, she hoped, might be able to tell her something about the state of affairs; but Shouanette, instead of being in her own room, was with Zaidette. The Princess had never entered the apartment of the Tartar wife, for whom she had the greatest contempt; but at present her anxiety overcame every other feeling, and she determined on paying her a visit. It was early in the morning, and Zaidette and Shouanette were at breakfast. The two wives invited the visitor to take a seat on the carpet, and offered her a cup of tea.

"What news?" asked the Princess, as she accepted the proffered cup.

"The messengers," said Zaidette, "bring word that

the money is at Hassaff-Yourt, where it is being changed for silver. To-morrow Shamil will send your people his last conditions, and I hope the affair will soon be brought to a happy termination."

The Princess could not conceal her joy at this unexpected news. But Zaidette was only deceiving her. The next day brought fresh misfortunes to the captives, and left them with less hope than ever of a speedy release.

Early in the morning they were awakened by the approach of Indris, who made his appearance in the gallery immediately in front of their door. The sight of Indris was, in itself, a sign of evil.

"This will not do, *ladies*," said Indris, with a sneer, annoyed at having to wait while they dressed themselves. "If they send you to fetch water, you will soon give up these grand airs."

Receiving the man's insults in silence, the Princesses, as soon as they were dressed, went into the balcony, and inquired what important news he had come to communicate.

"Prince Chavchavadzey's last letter has made Shamil very angry," replied Indris. "The Iman has decided to put an end to the negotiations, and to send you into the *aouls*, as presents to the Naibs; and I have come now to tell you to get ready for the journey. Look at your children's clothes, and see if they want anything new. They are also to be distributed about the *aouls*, and there they will not be able to get any thing."

It is impossible to describe the effect of these words upon the unhappy captives, who were agitated by rage, fear, and above all by despair at such a horrible con-

clusion to their misfortunes, when they had been in full expectation of a speedy liberation.

Princess Chavchavadzey, however, collected all her presence of mind, and said to Indris,—

"We do not believe that Prince David has written any thing offensive to Shamil, unless Shamil himself has been the cause of it. We demand to have the letter brought here and shown to us."

Indris went away; and the Princesses returned to their room. Here they were joined by Shamil's two eldest wives, and several of the servants of the seraglio. Observing the grief and confusion depicted on the countenances of the captives, Zaidette said to them,—

"How is it you are so agitated? Really it is not very astonishing that Shamil should behave so to you. Your relatives are to blame for it all; why do they not fulfil their promises?"

The Princesses could not and would not answer these remarks of Zaidette.

Soon afterwards some other messengers arrived from Shamil, namely, his son Kazi-Machmat, the interpreter Shah-Abbas, the steward Hadjio, and with them several Moullas and Naibs.

The captives were summoned to the gallery; and the conversation began as follows.

"Shamil," said Kazi-Machmat, "offended by Prince Chavchavadzey's letter, has determined to give you to his Naibs; but I have begged the Iman to send to your relatives once more, in order to induce them, if possible, to accede to his proposition."

"We are obliged to you for your kindness," said the

Princess Orbeliani; "but we cannot believe that Prince David would, without cause, write anything disagreeable to Shamil. We should like to see Prince David's letter ourselves."

Kazi-Machmat turned to Hadjio, took the letter from him, and handed it to the captives. The Princess Orbeliani read it and said, —

"There is nothing in this at all offensive to the Iman; and I beg Shah-Abbas will translate it more correctly than he appears to have done."

"We do not say that there is anything insulting in the letter; but you see what narrow conditions the Prince proposes, and we have at the same time heard that he has just received a much larger sum than he offers for your ransom."

The Princess Chavchavadzey was burning with rage; and rising from her seat, she said to Kazi-Machmat,—

"That is not true. I am certain that my husband would not conceal or keep back one *shaour* * when our liberty is at stake. He would sacrifice everything. Of what use is money to him now? In all probability he offers all he has had time to raise by the mortgage of his estates."

Then, turning to Shah-Abbas, she added,—

"If they do not understand, you ought to know that money cannot be borrowed without security; and my husband has nothing but his land."

"How can you speak so decidedly?" said Kazi-Machmat. "What should you say if your husband at last determined to give a larger sum?"

* A Georgian coin, worth twopence.

"He will not give a copeik more, I am certain of that."

"But if Government is helping him?"

"That cannot be; and if such were the case, my husband would at once offer all he could dispose of."

"Will you answer with your head that he has nothing more, and that he will never give more than what he has offered?"

"Yes, I will answer for it with my head," replied the Princess, without any reason for doing so beyond a sudden inspiration of boldness and decision.

A firm and determined bearing always produced its effect upon the mountaineers; and they now lowered their tone considerably, while Kazi-Machmat continued as follows: —

"Very well. We believe that your husband has sacrificed everything; but why has Prince Gregory Orbeliani broken off the negotiations, and even left Temir-Han-Shoura?"

"It is probably not of his own free will that he has done so, but at the command of his superior officer; and as for the negotiations, he certainly has not abandoned them."

"I am quite sure," said the Princess Orbeliani, "that he has himself contributed a large portion of the sum offered for our liberation."

"But he might have conducted a separate negotiation for you and the Princess Baratoff, as his nearest relatives; and if he does not do so, we shall let the Princess Chavchavadzey go, and keep you, your son, and your niece here."

The Princess Chavchavadzey again took part in the conversation.

"I am astonished," she said with indignation, "that you are not ashamed to say such things. Above all, how can such threats be uttered by Kazi-Machmat, who has gained universal glory among his people by the incursion into Kahetia, although he cannot conscientiously say that he drew his carbine from its case during the whole time? With two thousand Chechnians, he profited by the unprotected position of a few women, and took them as if in a cage. We have cost you nothing; and through us you are going to have the happiness of seeing your eldest brother again; besides which, you are to receive as much money as we can possibly collect. What more can you want from us? and what reason can you have for ill treating us? Rest assured that, if you ask for impossibilities, our relatives will have to sacrifice us, and Djemmal-Eddin will be kept in Russia. Consider how great your shame and humiliation will be then."

When the Princess' words were interpreted to Kazi-Machmat, he had enough conscientiousness to offer no reply. He reddened, and in his confusion cast down his eyes like an abashed child.

Then the Moullas commenced.

"That is all very well," they said, as if wishing to put an end to the conversation; "however, Shamil now allows you a week to remain here, on condition of your writing *good* letters to your relatives."

With this the stormy but decisive explanation terminated; but as he was going away with the others,

Shah-Abbas, the interpreter, whispered to the Princesses,—

"Don't disturb yourselves. That is the custom here —to frighten the Christians; but I know it will all end well."

In spite of this answer the captives, when they returned to their own room, wrote and sent off the following letters.

THE PRINCESS ANNA ELINICHNA CHAVCHAVADZEY TO PRINCE DAVID CHAVCHAVADZEY.

"Every day we feel our dreadful position more and more, but submit with Christian humility to the dreadful trial sent us by Heaven. To day, David, we were informed that your letter did not satisfy Shamil, and he was going to send us to different *aouls;* but his son Kazi-Machmat asked him to wait for Mohammed's return. What is to be done? It seems as though it were not God's will that we should see one another again in this world. In the hope of that future which is promised to the suffering, I will undergo with gratitude whatever may be in store for me here, and I will constantly pray that the fate of my children may be more fortunate than mine, and that God may strengthen you in the midst of your grief, and reward you for all the happiness which you have conferred on your family and on every one who has come near you.

"We all know that you will not spare any effort to save us; but it is impossible to reason with these people. Love and self-denial are things they cannot understand. It is impossible to convince them that you are unable

to collect any larger sum, and that what you already offer is not your own, but has been borrowed or begged from others.

"May God give you strength. I can add no more."

THE PRINCESS VARVARA ELIENITCHNA ORBELIANI TO PRINCE DAVID CHAVCHAVADZEY.

"To day they were going to distribute us among the Naibs. We thought we were quite lost; but Kazi-Machmat and other persons of distinction, including the Moullas, asked Shamil to send Hassan and Mohammed to you for the last time. Knowing that Gregory is not at Hassaff-Yourt, I beg of you, David, to send to Tiflis and tell him that we are perishing here. Perhaps, if he comes to Hassaff-Yourt, his representations may have some influence on Shamil. I have scarcely any hope, and scarcely any strength to write. Certainly everything is possible to God, and if it please him, we shall not be lost; but also if it be his will that we should perish, we will die, as we have lived, without complaining."

After despatching these letters, the Princesses remained for some time in a state of great agitation. The Princess Chavchavadzey especially was dreadfully excited, and naturally enough, as it was she who had borne all the brunt of the conversation with Kazi-Machmat and the Naibs. The effect of that conversation now began to show itself physically; and the exhaustion of the Princess was at length so great that she was obliged to lie down on the mattress. At that moment, Shouanette

entered the room, and, noticing her alarming condition, called the Princess Orbeliani, and said to her, as if confidentially,—

"Listen, Varvara, you are not so young as to be astonished at anything unexpected that may happen; accordingly, do not be startled at what I am going to tell you. Your sister is *dying*. Consequently it is the same thing for us whether we keep her here, or give her liberty at once. We will let her go with the children; and I advise you to remain here as a hostage until the million is paid."

"I am quite ready to remain," answered the Princess. "I expressed my willingness to do so before; but I must at the same time tell you that you will not get the million in any case, and Prince David would never consent to ransom one without the other. The affair has gone too far."

"But try; write to him and say that you agree to remain here in expectation of a ransom of one million roubles. Shamil has desired that you will do so."

"I am ready to write the letter, though I am quite convinced that neither Prince David nor my sister would agree to such conditions."

Shouanette was much pleased, and ran to acquaint Shamil with the success of the mission with which she had been entrusted.

In the meanwhile the Princess Chavchavadzey continued to suffer from the effects of her conversation with Kazi-Machmat, but was not so ill as Shouanette had imagined.

Several days, marked by no very striking incident,

passed by. Once, however, during that interval, the two eldest wives came into the Princesses' apartment; and while Shouanette went with the Princess Orbeliani into the balcony, Zaidette remained in the room with the Princess Chavchavadzey.

"Why are you so obstinate?" said Zaidette to the invalid. "Why do you not go away with your Alexander, and let your sister and the other children remain here until you send the million for their ransom?"

"But where are we to get the million?" replied the sick Princess.

"You should take your pocket-handkerchief and go round the town collecting it," suggested Zaidette.

Much as the Princess disliked the conversation of Zaidette, this last proposition could not fail to make her laugh. Then, in spite of herself she answered,—

"You argue in vain. I know my own position and resources. My origin does not allow me to solicit alms; and even if it did, in the whole course of my life I could not collect a tenth part of a million."

"How is it that your origin is an obstacle to your doing so?"

The Princess remembered all at once that she had made a mistake in speaking of her birth, and hurried to make up for it by giving an answer which was more suited to the comprehension of the Tartar woman:—

"Just as your position would be an impediment to you. Your husband will not let you go out of the house; and mine would not let me go about the town begging."

"Well, after this, I do not know what is to be done,"

said Zaidette, as she rose from her place and left the room.

A few days afterwards the emissaries who had taken charge of the Princesses' last letters returned from Hassaff-Yourt. With failing hearts the Princesses heard of their arrival, and asked to be informed of the result of their journey; but on this occasion they were not destined to hear anything at all disagreeable. The return of the emissaries was made known in the seraglio by a general movement and bustle, which were certain indications that the Iman was in a good humour.

The steward Hadjio informed the Princesses that Prince David had sent Shamil a very sharp and decided message, but that the Iman, in a most unexpected manner, had appeared quite satisfied — possibly, as Hadjio suggested, because decision and boldness were qualities for which he had a high admiration.

"Your affair is now taking a favourable turn," concluded the steward; "the old man, Djemmal-Eddin, takes your part in the warmest manner."

No sooner had the steward gone away than Djemmal-Eddin himself came to the door. The Princess Orbeliani went into the gallery to meet him; but the Princess Chavchavadzey was too ill to leave the room.

Djemmal-Eddin had a venerable and prepossessing appearance. He was a tall, thin, grey-haired old man, with regular features and an intelligent expression.

"How are you both?" he said, through the interpreter Tamara.

"My sister is ill," answered the Princess.

"I heard so some days since; and you also have be-

come thinner than you were. I am sorry for you; but you are killing yourselves. I do not understand why you are in such a state of despair. We told you from the first that no harm should come to you."

"That is true; but we are in the power of Shamil, and cannot be at our ease, knowing that from one day to another we may be separated, taken to the *aouls*, and given to the Naibs."

"If so, why did you not write to that effect to your husband's brother (Prince Gregory Orbeliani)? It might have *affected* him, and made him consent to increase the ransom?"

"Because I knew well enough that he had already done all that was possible, and that he could do nothing more."

"Why, then, do not you, who are the stronger of the two, remain here as a hostage, and liberate your sister, who is ill, and all her children?"

"I am willing to do so, and proposed it myself at the beginning of our captivity; but it is now too late, and our relations would not consent to such an arrangement."

Djemmal-Eddin, who had been sitting on the bench, now rose and said, with warmth, —

"I swear by my head that everything will end well! Shamil, though a man of great decision, is at the same time my son."

With these words the kind old man was about to depart; but the Princess stopped him with the question,—

"And if Shamil cannot induce his subjects to accept

a smaller ransom? We are told that the people think much more of the money than Shamil himself."

"There is a way of convincing the people," said Djemmal-Eddin; "but of that I cannot inform you. Before long, perhaps, you will have found it out yourselves."

And the old man retired.

In reality the Princesses were not long discovering in what the means consisted of which Djemmal-Eddin had spoken, and which were to induce the people to accept the sum offered by the captives' relatives instead of the wished-for million. In the midst of the wild woods and desert mountains of Shamil's domains lived a celebrated hermit, an anchorite of Muridism, who enjoyed a wide renown as a holy, God-fearing man, and who for many years had been contemplating His greatness in uninterrupted solitude. This anchorite had been sent for, and had arrived at Vedenno, where he was placed in Shamil's own room, the door of which led to the seraglio, while the window looked out upon the exterior courtyard. In this courtyard assembled a crowd of mountaineers, consisting principally of those who had taken part in the incursion into Kahetia, and who therefore were particularly interested in the affair of the ransom; and every day, without intermission, for three weeks, the old man preached from the window the doctrines of Muridism. Between the parts of his discourse he prayed, using the strangest gesticulations, and giving to his body the movement of a pestle in a mortar. In the intervals between his prayers, he sang, in a piercing voice, "Astafiour, astafiour-Allah." At

the same time all who were present in the room, that is to say, Shamil, Kazi-Machmat, Djemmal-Eddin, and the most distinguished of the Iman's body-guard sang in chorus, "Lia-illiaha-il-Allah," making the same circular movement as the hermit himself. The singing and movements became gradually more rapid, until at last the executants reached a state of ecstacy, and the phrase sounded from the bottom of their breasts like a single word, "*Lia ! lia !*"

These holy exercises, performed by the chief representatives of the celebrated Caucasian Muridism, were distinctly audible in the Princesses' apartment.

The Princesses, who as yet were unable to guess the object of this comedy, meditated on the strange manner in which the Mahometans worshipped God; but Madame Drancey lost all patience listening to the piercing sounds of the monotonous hymn.

"*Ah ! j'en ai assez de ces prières,*" she exclaimed, stopping her ears, while little George Orbeliani's nurse said with much *naïveté*, —

"Is it possible, Madame, that God will accept such a prayer?"

With regard to the exclamations of the hermit, who constantly repeated his *Astafiour-Allah*, the nurse remarked that he evidently meant *Astaf milion* (that is to say, "abandon the million").

The children for their part were delighted, as they were now enabled to imitate the Murids' singing with wonderful correctness.

It has been already said that the preaching and praying lasted three weeks. It had commenced before

the disagreeable conversation with Kazi-Machmat; but it was only now that the captives began to understand what it really meant. Towards the conclusion of his discourse, the hermit generally impressed on the people the virtue of abstinence, spoke to them of the vanity of all worldly possessions, and warned them that riches led to every kind of vice, and to destruction as well in this world as in the next.

Shamil had called in the hermit in order to prepare the people for consenting to the acceptance of the ransom offered by the Princesses' relatives, which was so much less than the sum demanded by the mountaineers. When the Princesses understood this, they wondered how Shamil, who was now adopting such powerful means for influencing his people, and who must have made up his mind long before to accept the ransom proposed, could nevertheless have allowed them to be annoyed by unavailing solicitations and threats. Their astonishment was increased when they found that for two weeks the mountaineers had been making a road to the river Michik (the place of exchange), in order to facilitate the passage of carriages on wheels, that is to say, their home-made *arbas*. In reality Shamil's anxiety to remove every obstacle to the return of his eldest son was evident; and consequently it would be difficult to account for the continued ill treatment of the captives, were it not for the fact that a great many things occurred in the seraglio without his knowledge, and even contrary to his orders. Probably the avarice and ill nature of Zaidette were the chief causes of the annoyances to which the captives were subjected during

the last days of their residence in the seraglio. For these days were really the last. On the evening of the morning on which old Djemmal-Eddin visited the Princesses (Saturday, March 5), the steward Hadjio came to them, and informed them that they were free; that Djemmal-Eddin, who had a right to the fifth part of the ransom, had offered to give up his share to be divided among the people; that the people, in consideration of this sacrifice, had agreed to accept the 40,000 roubles, and that messengers had been sent with the news to Hassaff-Yourt.

Now, according to the custom, there was much running about and hurrying to and fro. All the inhabitants of the seraglio hastened to the captives to congratulate them on their approaching liberation — all, except Zaidette. But the one who appeared more delighted than all the rest was the grandmother of Djemmal-Eddin, the old Bahoo. She visited the prisoners, and in the abundance of her joy wept and kissed their hands.

CHAP. IX.

EIGHT months had now passed since the destruction of Tsenondahl and the commencement of the Princesses' captivity. But they had still to remain six days longer in Shamil's seraglio, before they returned to their native land.

In the meanwhile Kazi-Machmat and his wife were on their way from their province to Vedenno, where they were to meet Shamil's long-lost son, who was now returning to his native land; independently of which, the wife was exceedingly anxious to have an interview with the captive princesses.

On Monday Hadjio came to the Princesses' room, and asked them to write to Hassaff-Yourt, saying that Shamil had chosen Thursday the 10th of March for their exchange. According to the mountaineers, Thursday is Shamil's favourite day, and is always selected by him for the commencement of any important enterprise.

It may be imagined with what joy the letter was written.

On Monday evening Kazi-Machmat and his wife reached the *aoul;* and about the same time came young Machmat-Shabi, in whom the Princesses saw a great change. His bearing was more sedate, and he appeared

to have given up his mischievous habits. It was evident that, wherever he had been, he had been well schooled.

When Kazi-Machmat and his wife were known to be approaching the *aoul*, Shamil's daughters, accompanied by their governess Hadji-Rebil and several other women, rode out to meet them. After the party had left the seraglio, Shamil, happening to walk out of his private room into the court-yard, saw Machmat-Shafbi there, and began to reproach him with not having gone out to meet his brother and his brother's wife. The youth ran to the stables, and forthwith saddled a horse; but he was not in time to meet the visitors, as Karimat, Kazi-Machmat's wife, had already reached the gates. She was sitting gracefully (though at the same time like a man), on a beautiful horse. She was dressed in a cloak of gold brocade, lined with sable. From her head a *chadra* of white cambric hung down her neck and back. Her face was covered with a thick veil embroidered in gold.

This was the first time the Princesses saw such a rich costume in the seraglio. They were astonished above all at the sable and the gold brocade; but the presence of such luxuries among the mountaineers of Chechni was soon explained. The Princesses remembered that Karimat was the daughter of Daniel-Sultan, who had once been the independent sovereign of his own province, and afterwards a major-general in the Russian service; so that he had had ample opportunities of procuring the most costly articles of dress for his wife, from whom, in all probability, they had descended to Karimat as her mother's heiress.

Karimat was met with much ceremony in the court-yard of the seraglio. She was received in succession by Zaidette, then by Shouanette, and finally by Aminette; after which she was conducted to the apartment of Zaidette, where she took her seat on the carpet. After some minutes, Shamil entered the room, and in a very strange manner welcomed his daughter-in-law.

"Dear Karimat," he said in a very solemn tone, "it is very agreeable for me to see you; but it is not agreeable at our first meeting to remark that my son's wife has not yet given up her former habits, and that she continues to wear expensive apparel. It appears to me that a gold cloak is quite unnecessary, especially here, where simplicity is the rule with every one."

Unfortunately Karimat's reply to the Iman was not communicated to the Princesses.

On the following day, Tuesday, Zaidette sent to tell the captives that, if they wished to see the things which had been taken from Tsenondahl, they could come to her room, when they would perhaps feel inclined to buy some of them. The Princesses accepted the invitation, and found a number of persons assembled and seated in a very formal manner on the carpets. On one side of Zaidette sat Machmat-Shabi, and, on the other, Shouanette. Next to Shouanette was Karimat; then came Aminette, and afterwards, in due order, were Shamil's daughters and several other women. The steward Hadjio was also there; and his presence deprived the Princesses of the pleasure of seeing Karimat's face, as all the women remained veiled in consequence of a man being in the room. In the midst of the company,

numerous articles of plate and jewellery, the plunder of Tsenondahl, were lying on the ground. Most of this once valuable property was battered or broken, much of it was utterly spoiled, and altogether not a tenth part remained uninjured. The Princesses were asked to sit down and choose, from among their own things, whatever they felt disposed to purchase. They replied that they had been so much knocked about, as to be now almost worthless.

The Princesses could not look without a pang upon the shattered remains of their family plate and exquisite jewellery, of which many pieces were heir-looms. They were especially grieved at finding the fragments of a diamond bouquet, magnificently set in the antique style, and which, independently of its intrinsic value, was admirable as a work of art.

But there was another reason for the extraordinary value which was set upon this bouquet by the Princesses. It had been given by the Empress Catherine the Great to Prince David's grandmother when she accompanied her husband Prince Gersevan Chavchavadzey to St. Petersburgh, where he had been sent on a mission by Eracli the last king but one of Georgia.

As for the modern work, wherever there was enamel, the surface had been scratched or chipped, probably through the mountaineers testing it with their daggers. In the diamond ornaments many of the best stones were missing.

Among all this dilapidated jewellery the Princess found a small and not very expensive bracelet, which had belonged to her eldest daughter Salome.

"This was my daughter's," said the Princess Chavchavadzey.

Machmat-Shabi, with the cordiality of a good-natured boy, instantly took it, and said, "I will take it to Salome;" but Zaidette snatched it from his hand, and began seriously to reproach him. She was determined to keep up her character to the last.

After this a box was opened which contained various articles belonging to the Princess Orbeliani. All these things had been much better preserved, probably because they had chanced to fall into better hands. The Princess searched for some trinkets which had once been her husband's, and succeeded in finding two rings that he had been in the habit of wearing. But she had the imprudence to rejoice at her discovery, and consequently was deprived of it. Every one saw how Zaidette took hold of the rings and slipped them down her sleeve.

The captives now refused to buy anything, upon which Shouanette turned to the Princess Chavchavadzey and said that there was one ring which pleased her very much, that it was valued at fifteen roubles, and that she should like to buy it from the people.

"Do as you like," replied the Princesses; "all the things are in your power and at your disposal."

The captives returned in sadness to their room, and could not help comparing their present position with their former one—so forcibly recalled to them by the remnants of their lost riches. But they remembered that in a few days the best of all treasures, liberty and their native land, would be restored to them, and they were not long in consoling themselves with this happy prospect.

Karimat, whom they had been so anxious to see, had remained veiled during the whole of the conversation respecting the jewellery; but the Princesses were compensated for this by a very amusing scene in which Karimat afterwards took part, and which they saw through the door of their room. The grandmother Bahoo, in whose apartments Kazi-Machmat was staying (while his wife lived and slept either with Zaidette or with Hadji-Rebil), sent her grandchildren, Kazi-Machmat's sisters, to bring Karimat, whether she liked it or not, into her room. Karimat positively refused to go, upon which Shamil's daughters watched for her in the courtyard, seized her, and carried her along by force, amid peals of laughter. Karimat nevertheless contrived to escape, and ran to Zaidette.

This entertaining scene explained to the captives one of the customs of the Chechnian seraglio; and they discovered that propriety forbade Kazi-Machmat not only to share the same room with his wife, but even to meet her, during the whole period of his visit to his father. This was why Karimat so positively refused to enter, even in the day time, the apartment of the old Bahoo in which Kazi-Machmat was residing, and why she also resisted the attempt of her husband's sisters to convey her there by force.

Such excessive prudery might be accounted for by the purity and modesty of the mountaineers' life; but it would be more correct to adopt the explanation of Madame Drancey: "*de la pruderie qui masque la nudité de l'impudeur, et qui met à tort les points sur les i.*"

Towards the evening Karimat sent to the Princess Chavchavadzey, to say that she should like very much to see Prince David's *daguerreotype*, which had been sent to his wife with many other things at the beginning of her captivity. The Princess was also most anxious to see Karimat, and lost no time in taking her the portrait herself. Karimat was sitting in Hadji-Rebil's room. When the Princess entered, her host, who was working some shoes for the expected Djemmal-Eddin, rose from her place, took two steps toward her, held out her hand, and, with an ease and grace which was surprising in an inhabitant of Chechni, said,—

"I am much obliged to you for bringing me yourself what I asked for, and thus affording me the agreeable opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with you. I was thinking of going to visit you, but I was afraid you would think I was only prompted by curiosity."

The Princess did not know which to admire the most, her language, which, so far from being that of an inhabitant of a barbarous country, was worthy of a lady moving in the most refined society, or her majestic beauty. The conversation and deportment of Karimat made the Princess forget that she was still in Shamil's seraglio. This was the first time she had been addressed in a civilised manner. Shouanette and Aminette had certainly always behaved to her with much kindness; but their conversation bore no resemblance to that of educated ladies, nor to that of Karimat.

Karimat's outward appearance also deserves to be mentioned. She was tall, well formed, slender and

graceful, with hazel eyes, a short, straight, and rather sharp nose, a beautifully-formed mouth and admirable teeth. She had long thick black hair, black eyebrows, long silken eyelashes, and white delicate hands.

Her costume corresponded with her beauty. She wore a long fine white chemise, so long that the extremity touched the ground and concealed her feet. Above the chemise she wore an *ahalooch* of dark crimson satin, lined with green *taffetas*, and trimmed with a satin ribbon of the same colour. The slashed sleeve of the *ahalooch* was held together with loops and buttons of gold, which also adorned the front of the body. Beneath the satin sleeves of the *ahalooch* were seen the long white ones of the chemise. On her head she wore a small black silk handkerchief, and over that a white muslin veil which hung in folds down her back. Her earrings were in the form of a crescent, like those of Shamil's wives; but while theirs were of silver and quite plain, hers were of gold and ornamented with precious stones.

The Princess and Karimat sat down, and soon became intimate, although their conversation was carried on through an interpreter.

"Do you understand Georgian?" asked the Princess.

"I understand it, but I am ashamed to talk it," replied Karimat. "I was very young when I was removed by my relatives from Tiflis, where I used to live with my father and mother."

"Is your mother still alive?"

"No; she died some years since."

They then talked about the journey from Kahetia to

Vedenno, after which a variety of unimportant subjects were discussed, Karimat continuing to converse in the most agreeable manner.

The Princess could not understand how Karimat had learned to speak with so much grace and facility. The only explanation of such a phenomenon in a woman of Chechni is to be found in Karimat's noble extraction, and the natural result of good birth, in her early education, and in the influence of her father, who had passed the greater part of his youth in the society of Europeans. However this may be, it is impossible but that the existence of such a woman in Chechni, and above all in the exalted position occupied by the wife of Shamil's heir, will have an effect upon the latter, and, through him, on his future subjects. The Princess Chavchavadzey's conversation with the interesting Karimat was interrupted, to the great regret of both, by Shouanette's servant, who came to say that her mistress was unwell, and would be glad if the Princesses would pass "their last evening" with her. However, Karimat did not leave the Princess, but went with her to Shouanette's room, where they were joined by the Princess Orbeliani and the Princess Nina Baratoff. At one time Shouanette expressed her delight at the captives' liberation, and at another could not speak of their departure without tears.

"And I —" she said, "never!"

The party were all occupied making a *chalma* for a Circassian cap, which was to be given to little George Orbeliani; but Shouanette could think of nothing but the approaching separation.

"Now you are going away, you will forget us," said Shouanette, in a melancholy tone. "When you get home, you will live as you did before; but I —— We had become fond of you; your presence here occupied and interested us; and we were quite accustomed to you."

"Do not forget," said Zaidette, "with what kindness you were treated, and how much was done to alleviate your fate."

"We certainly shall never forget those who have been kind to us, and have wished us well," answered the Princess Chavchavadzey.

At this moment some one entered the room with the news that the *arbas* had arrived. These were *arbas* with four wheels, such as had never been seen before in Chechni. At the same time Eva, the infant daughter of the priest of Kizis-hevi, was brought from the *aoul* into the seraglio, Shamil having (as we have said) given her to the Princess, who had nursed her on the road. Zaidette had the bad taste to say, in the Iman's name, that for the freedom of the little child thirty roubles more must be added. The Princess promised that that sum should be paid on the place of exchange. There was another little girl of five years of age, Thecla, whose release could not be procured by any means, and who, in spite of everything, was detained in the seraglio.

When the visitors returned to their own room, a great crowd assembled there, including the women who had still to remain at Vedenno. The Princesses divided among them whatever clothes they could spare, their dishes, saucepans, and, in short, all that had been sent

to them during their captivity. Zaidette, hearing what was taking place, ran into the apartment, and, keeping up her character to the last, took possession of the Princesses' *somovar.**

* The Russian tea-urn, in which the water is heated by means of charcoal placed in a tube in the centre.

CHAP. X.

WITH the dawn of the 9th of March commenced a happy day for the Princesses, but one which was at the same time not without its sadness.

The first thing in the morning, the steward Hadjio began to prepare the *arbas*, to which horses instead of oxen were harnessed; and the Princesses were still more astonished at seeing men attired like Russian coachmen holding the reins, while on the left leader of each team, a postillion was seated. It was evident that Shamil wished to make a great display.

While carpets were being placed at the bottom of the *arbas*, which were at the same time stocked with loaves (on this occasion *not* covered with grease, thanks to Aminette's attention), fruit, and other refreshments, the captives were invited to Zaidette's room, where tea was prepared for them. Shamil's wives and daughters, Karimat, and all the Princesses' friends were present.

During the breakfast the conversation flagged dreadfully. Those who were departing and those who had to remain were equally sad. Yes, it was painful even for those who were going away; for their delight at returning to their native land could not extinguish in them a feeling of melancholy, arising from the thought that they were separating for ever from a world in which,

in the midst of much harshness and cruelty, they had also met with sympathy and kindness. Aliens as these women were to them in almost every respect, they still could not part from them without sorrow. Now that they were returning to a Christian and civilised world, it was painful to reflect that their late associates were still to suffer beneath the yoke of a false and fatal superstition. Such were the thoughts that were uppermost in the Princesses' minds during their last interview with the inhabitants of Shamil's seraglio.

At last the moment for saying farewell arrived.

The Princesses bowed politely to Zaidette, and commissioned her to thank Shamil for all the care he had taken of them.

Then they embraced and kissed Shouanette.

"Do not forget me," she said through her tears.

Aminette was not able to bear the leave-taking. She ran weeping from the room, and, wrapping herself up in her cloak, waited in the courtyard near the gates.

After pressing the hand of Karimat and the others who were present, the Princesses covered their faces with their veils, and went out upon the gallery. Here at the door they met Shamil's tutor, old Djemmal-Eddin, and told the venerable old man that they knew and felt how much they were indebted to him.

"God be with you," he replied. "Be happy, you have suffered a great deal."

Passing along the gallery, they came to the apartment of the grandmother Bahoo, and were met by her at the door. The old woman, with tears in her eyes, thanked them that, through their misfortunes and the

patient manner in which they had borne their sufferings, they had procured her the pleasure of seeing once more, before her death, her lost and favourite grandson, Djemmal-Eddin. "I shall never forget," continued Bahoo, "what you have undergone. I will pray for your happiness."

By the side of Bahoo, and looking up earnestly at the Princess Chavchavadzey, was the poor little girl Thecla, who was being detained in the seraglio. At the sight of this victim of fanaticism, the Princess felt her heart sink. She went towards the child, made the sign of the cross before her, and said,—

"If you should grow up here, never forget that you are a Georgian, and whenever you have an opportunity help the Christians."

Whether the little girl understood the significance of this important injunction, is unknown.*

The Princesses now began to take their seats in the *arbas*. In the first the Princess Chavchavadzey placed herself with her children and the daughter of the Kisishevi priest, whom she had now adopted. In the second were the Princess Orbeliani, the Princess Baratoff, Madame Drancey, and the nurse who was carrying

* The Princesses did not understand Shamil's obstinate determination to keep Thecla. But it occurred to them that Shamil had chosen all his wives, with the exception of Zaidette the daughter of his venerable tutor, from among his captives, by which means he avoided marrying any of the daughters of his Naibs,—thus confining the right of succession in the strictest manner to his own direct heirs, and destroying all pretext for intrigues upon one important point. The Princesses could not help fancying that Thecla was destined to be made the wife of some one at Dargi-Vedenno, probably of Machmat-Shabi.

little George. The third and fourth were occupied by the servants from Tsenondahl, who were ransomed simultaneously with the Princesses.

Twenty-two persons, the exact number that had been taken from Tsenondahl eight months before, were now returning there. But the individuals were not all the same. Daredjana the steward's wife had been murdered by her conductors, at the foot of the hill of Kontzhi, where the mountaineers fell into Captain Hitrovo's ambuscade; and Lydia, the Princess's little girl, had perished at the same time. On the other hand, one of the captives had given birth to a child during her residence in the seraglio, and, finally, the priest's daughter, whom the Princess had adopted, compensated, numerically speaking, for the unfortunate nurse, who, in spite of every exertion to rescue her, had been detained in some unknown *aoul*.

The liberated prisoners rode from the inner into the outer court, and passed through the principal gates. Here they breathed more freely, as they once more felt the open air upon their cheeks.

As they went through the *aoul*, they heard the following appeal, in the Georgian language, proceeding from several of the houses: —

"You who know what we suffer here, do not forget us!"

The *arbas* were accompanied by a large escort, indeed by an entire division, at the head of which rode Kazi-Machmat upon a magnificent white horse. Machmat-Shabi was also present at the head of his company, which was composed of boys of his own age, and

formed part of Kazi-Machmat's division. While they were still in the *aoul*, the Princesses suddenly came up with Prince Ivan Chavchavadzey. This meeting was more gratifying, inasmuch as it was entirely unexpected. Prince Ivan rode towards the Princesses, and said that he was himself quite unaware to whom he was indebted for his delivery.

"And Prince Vagnadzey?" asked the Princesses.

"He, I regret to say, is still in captivity," was the answer.

On passing through the *aoul* this time, the Princesses were so elated that they again failed to notice any particular point of interest about the place, such as must undoubtedly exist. They remember, however, that they came to a drawbridge, which was thrown over a very broad moat filled with water. After crossing the bridge they turned to the left, and instantly began to descend a mountain. The first *arba* accomplished this descent in safety, but the second one, in which the Princess Orbeliani was riding, was upset by its awkward driver.

Luckily no one suffered from the fall.

From the foot of the mountain they went through a wood, and came out opposite a river, along the banks of which, and sometimes in the very bed, they drove nearly the whole day. On each side of the river were high mountains covered with wood.

The party halted in a wood at a small *aoul*, in front of which lay a broad green plain. Here the mountaineers indulged in a number of their favourite exercises. They raced, chased one another, and fired at different objects thrown high into the air. In these

trials of skill Kazi-Machmat was especially successful, nor was Machmat-Shabi much behind his brother. Both gave evidence of remarkable activity and adroitness; and both were very graceful, and looked remarkably handsome in their gala costumes. Kazi-Machmat was dressed in white, and Machmat-Shabi in dark blue.

Here the Princesses were to be joined by Shamil, who was advancing under a large black parasol, in the midst of his Murids, with Daniel-Sultan, Kazi-Machmat's father-in-law, riding by his side. After a short rest and a light repast, the *cortége* was again in motion, and before dark reached Maior-Toup, the last *aoul* in the territory of Shamil, immediately opposite the Russian frontier. In Maior-Toup they were to pass the night. Shamil and the Princesses occupied contiguous huts, and were protected by Murids, the flower of the Iman's body-guard.

Having made their arrangements as best they could, to pass their last night in Shamil's territory, the Princesses occupied themselves writing letters to their relatives, and at Shamil's request named the hour and minute at which the exchange was to take place on the following day. Among other things, the Princesses wrote for a gold watch to give to the Moulla, the same old man who had behaved with so much sympathy and kindness towards them when he accompanied them from the *aoul* of Dido to Dargi-Vedenno, and who had now made his appearance to go with them to the place of exchange. It would also be a most unjust omission not to state that the "benevolent Moulla" visited the captives twice during their residence in Shamil's seraglio.

The Princesses were preparing to go to sleep when a messenger (Abdoul, a Russian deserter) came to them from Shamil and told the Princess Varvara Orbeliani that the Iman wished her to write to the fort of Kourinsk, which was not more than twenty versts * distant, and where Prince David and Djemmal-Eddin were to pass the night. She was to ask Gramoff the interpreter to come at once to Maiour-Top. The Princess instantly complied with Shamil's desire, but was at the same time much alarmed by a suspicion that some new obstacles were being invented.

A few hours afterwards, Isaac Gramoff arrived from the fort of Kourinsk, and remained during the whole night alone with Shamil. In the morning he visited the captives and hastened their preparations for the conclusion of the journey.

"What did Shamil want with you?" asked the Princesses.

"To arrange all the details respecting the exchange, and to ask our people not to bring too large a body of men," was the reply. Gramoff then gave the Princesses the watch they had asked for, took a hurried farewell, and went off.

Gramoff's answer did not satisfy the Princesses at all. On the contrary, they could not understand why Shamil wished there should be this diminution in the number of Russian troops present at the exchange, and were afraid that he entertained some treacherous intentions. These suspicions poisoned the moments of delightful expectation which they would otherwise have enjoyed.

* About thirteen miles.

Soon after the departure of Gramoff, the captives, Shamil, and all his troops, left Maior-Toup, and advanced in the direction of the river Michik. Immediately behind the captives, at the head of his division, rode Kazi-Machmat. Then came the Naibs with their respective regiments; and in the rear, Shamil and Daniel-Sultan surrounded by Murids.

The journey was not a tedious one. The Michik was quite near; however, before the Princesses reached the place where the Russian regiments were to be stationed, an incident occurred of no great importance, but which at the same time deserves mention. Abdoul (the Russian deserter) galloped past the Princesses, announcing, right and left, what he appeared to think excellent news. The Princesses in the first instance did not recognise him, although they had seen him the night before. Having asked one of the drivers, who was also a Russian, what the news which appeared to give so much pleasure to the news-bearer happened to be, they received the following answer: —

"It is easy to tell why he is so pleased; something must have happened to the Russians."

The driver of the *arba* in which the Princess Chavchavadzey was riding turned round and added,—

"There, my lady, you see what sort of birds are here. Do not think anything of him. Although you see him riding about in that style, he has a very bad life of it, like all us silly deserters. We are treated like dogs. They give us all the dirtiest and heaviest work; and if you do anything to offend them, your head is instantly cut off. All the deserters are treated exactly as I tell

you. Shamil mistrusts and dislikes deserters, and keeps them for the dirty work."

"Then why do you not return to your regiment?"

"We should be very glad to return, but we are afraid of being called to account."

In this manner the Princesses proceeded along the road, which had evidently been only just cut out and laid down. They forded a river on horseback, ascended a height in the same manner, then took their seats again on the *arbas*, and continued their journey.

The Princess Chavchavadzey's driver now turned round and pointed towards the chief who was riding by Shamil's side, wearing a Russian cloak and a *chalma* round his cap.

"Who is he?" inquired the Princess.

"A Russian general, who has nothing left of the general but his cloak," answered the driver, ironically, and then, by way of explanation, added that this was Daniel-Sultan.

Having descended a woody slope, the Princesses saw before them a spacious plain, through which meandered the almost dried-up river Michik. Beyond the river, on a height, the Russian regiments were beginning to appear.

The *arbas* halted. In a state of indescribable agitation the Princesses got out on to the grass and began to pray. A few minutes afterwards Nicolai and Hugo (Baron Nicolai's servants) approached the captives and welcomed them. The Princesses took their seats again in the *arbas*, and were driven over two ditches, that is to say, dried-up arms of the Michik. In one of these the steward Hadjio had to remain with

a bundle containing a Chechnian costume for young Djemmal-Eddin. Then the rest of the party continued to advance towards the Russian soldiers. In front of the *arbas* rode Kazi-Machmat, Machmat-Shabi, and the Murids. At last the *arbas* stopped, and the "benevolent Moulla" of Dido took little Alexander in his arms and carried him to Prince David. At the same time Djemmal-Eddin, in the uniform of a Russian officer, rode forward to the Princess Chavchavadzey, and giving her a letter from her relatives in Moscow, said that he had visited them all personally before taking his departure for the Caucasus. The Princess received the letter in silence. She wished to thank Djemmal-Eddin; but pity for the fate which awaited him, gratitude for his self-devotion, and a host of other feelings, deprived her of the power of speech. She was unable to say one word to the chief author of her liberation.

The *arbas* were now surrounded by Murids, while Kazi-Machmat rode up to the Princesses and addressed them as follows: —

"The Iman has commissioned me to ask you, Princesses, to preserve no evil recollections of the time you passed in his house. If you suffered any discomfort in our family, it certainly did not arise from any intention on his part, but only from ignorance as to the proper manner of treating you."

The interpreter translated these words of Shamil's son, which are in every respect worthy of remark. Then — but the Princesses only remember that then commenced the happiest moments of their lives!

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

As far as Shamil personally is concerned, we shall learn much more of his character, thoughts, and even habits, from the part he took in the negotiations respecting the ransom and the exchange of prisoners, than from the Princess Chavchavadzey's detailed account of the daily life in the Iman's seraglio. Of these negotiations the captives, as has been seen, had hitherto scarcely heard anything.

The duration of the Princesses' imprisonment depended principally on the activity displayed by the disconsolate husband and bereaved father, Prince David Chavchavadzey. The part taken by the Government certainly decided the fate of two of the most distinguished families of Georgia; but in spite of the Emperor's offer, the mountaineers persisted so obstinately in their exorbitant demands that the negotiations would have been interminable, had they not been conducted with the greatest energy and skill, not only on the part of Prince David, but also on that of Prince Gregory Orbeliani and Major-General Baron Nicolai, who joined their exertions

to his. Fortunately the three negotiators were not only very near relatives of the captives, but also the chief military commanders in the districts adjoining Shamil's domains of Chechni and Daghestan.

We left Prince Chavchavadzey on the 10th of July, after he had despatched an account of his military proceedings to his superior officer, and set off through Telaff to Tiflis.

At Tiflis the Prince went to the house of his youngest sister's husband, Baron A. Nicolai (member of the governing council of the Trans-Caucasian provinces, and inspector of schools in the Caucasus). In the midst of his relatives, and surrounded by universal sympathy, he was at the same time quite inconsolable, especially as he had heard no information whatever respecting his lost family. It was not until the 10th of August that he received the first letter from Dargi-Vedenno; and it may be remembered that the captives did not arrive there until the 6th. The contents of the letter were simple enough. The captives merely stated that they had arrived at Shamil's house after a journey of four weeks, that Shamil showed them attention, that he had promised all the prisoners from Tsenondahl should be kept together, and that he did not object to receive propositions for their ransom.

The only consoling part of the letter was the last paragraph, as it had been supposed Shamil would not liberate the Princesses on any terms, and that it would even be impossible to open a negotiation with him. Before leaving Shildy, the Prince had liberated a Chechnian prisoner and sent him with a letter

to Shamil and Daniel-Sultan at the tower of Pohali, begging them not to take the captives into the interior, and reminding them that there was nothing to be gained by treating them harshly. He had concluded by proposing that the terms of a ransom should be agreed upon at once and before the Princesses were removed from the tower,—assuring the Mountain Chief at the same time that he would offer all the money he could command. To this no answer had been sent.

Prince David then was much rejoiced to find that there was at length a possibility of treating for the Princesses' freedom. The letter from Vedenno had been forwarded to the Prince by Baron Nicolai (the General). The Baron had received it from Mohammed, the man from the frontier, who afterwards acted constantly as a messenger between Shamil and the Princesses' relatives. Prince David instantly prepared to set off for Hassaff-Yourt; but five days elapsed before he was ready to start, during which time he was occupied procuring a variety of things to forward to the captives. At last, on the 15th of August, when all the necessary preparations were completed, he left Tiflis accompanied by his sister the Baroness Nicolai.

About forty versts from Hassaff-Yourt the travellers were met by Baron Nicolai and his servant Nicolas, who, after bravely volunteering to visit the captives, had now just returned from Dargi-Vedenno. Nicolas took his seat in the carriage by the side of Prince Chavchavadzey and his sister, and all the way to Hassaff-Yourt consoled them by giving comparatively favourable accounts of the captives. As soon as they arrived at

Hassaff-Yourt, Prince Chavchavadzey wrote and despatched to Shamil the following letter.

"Neither your position nor mine will allow either of us to bargain. To me, especially when the happiness of my family is in question, such a course would be quite unbecoming. You know well enough how completely I have been ruined by your last incursion into Kahetia; and I therefore think I may reckon upon your demands being somewhat in accordance with my resources. I have simply nothing left of my own, but I have been able to collect from different persons the sum of forty thousand roubles silver; and this sum I offer you for the liberty of my own family, and that of my wife's sister. My wife's letter makes me acquainted with your treatment of herself and the children; and I feel it my duty to thank you, while I again recommend them to your special attention."

This letter was taken to Shamil by Mohammed and Zachar.

Two weeks afterwards Shamil's answer was received. It contained, as is already known, a demand for a million roubles, and the return of his eldest son Djemmal-Eddin. Mohammed and Zachar, to whom the answer had been confided, were accompanied to Hassaff-Yourt by Hassan, an emissary of Shamil's own choosing. Prince Chavchavadzey, perplexed and confounded by the Iman's exorbitant conditions, went off to consult Prince Gregory Orbeliani at Temir-Han-Shoura, whither he was accompanied by Hassan, who was waiting to take back the reply to Dargi-Vedenno. However, before leaving

Hassaff-Yourt, the Prince despatched the following letter to General Read.

"I have this day received Shamil's first letter, containing the conditions on which he will liberate my family and that of my sister-in-law. At the same time I received an oral communication through Hassan his confidential agent; and I regret to say that neither Shamil's letter nor Hassan's words afford me the least consolation.

"Shamil's demands surpass anything that could have been anticipated. He will, moreover, not negotiate for my family separately, but wishes them to be ransomed conjointly with a hundred and twenty other captives who have been distributed about the country. For the liberation of all the prisoners he demands, first, his son Djemmal-Eddin; secondly, the nephew of Gamzad; thirdly, the son of the Avarian Alibek, Harasilai; fourthly, the son of Gamzad Shah Islam; and in addition to this, a hundred and sixteen other prisoners, and a million of money. Of course such conditions cannot be entertained for an instant, and I would not have thought of troubling you with them, had you not commanded me to forward to you every particular relating to this affair.

"To-morrow at daybreak I shall send Hassan with a letter to Shamil, stating that his conditions not only cannot be complied with, but that, as they now stand, they put a stop to all possibility of my negotiating with him. I have also repeated to him my former assurance, that he will have to treat with me as with a private individual, and must not think of the government interfering in the matter. Whatever answer I may receive from him, I

shall make it my special duty to communicate to your Excellency.

"I am about to visit Shoura, in order to consult with Prince Orbeliani.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

"September 11, 1854."

After his consultation with Prince Orbeliani, Prince Chavchavadzey sent off Hassan with a letter to Shamil, in which, among other things, he said that it was impossible for the government to force the Iman's son to return to Chechni, inasmuch as Djemmal-Eddin was not a prisoner but an officer in the Russian army. He went on to say that no one would dare to make such a proposition to the Emperor, but that, if Djemmal-Eddin himself felt disposed to return to his native country, and asked permission to do so, it was probable that it would be granted.

Shamil's letter in reply contained nothing but a repetition of his former demands, which were again met by the Prince with positive assurances that they could not be complied with. Several letters of the same kind respectively on each side were exchanged, until at last Prince David sent his servant Oscar to Dargi-Vedenno. During Oscar's absence, a letter arrived from Prince Bariatinsky (Chief of the Staff of the *corps d'armée* in the Caucasus), marked "private" and stating that General Read had communicated Shamil's proposition to the Minister of War to be transmitted by him to the Emperor.

"General Read," continued the letter, "also informed

the minister that Shamil requested permission to send a trustworthy person to converse with his son and ascertain whether it is his wish to return to his native land, adding that, if that should not be his desire, his father meant to disown him for ever. As the return of Djemmal-Eddin is the first thing stipulated for by Shamil, General Read also stated that it was only in case of the Emperor consenting to this that the negotiations could be carried on at all.

"To day General Prince Dolgoroukoff has informed General Read that the Emperor considering there is no obstacle to the return of Shamil's son, who is a Cornet in the Grand Duke Michael's regiment of Oulans, has commanded that Djemmal-Eddin Shamil be asked whether he is desirous of receiving his father's envoys and hearing what they have to say, or whether he would prefer not to have any communication with them; and in either case to state positively for himself what his feelings are on the subject.

"The Minister of War having written to His Imperial Highness the Commander-in-chief of the Guard, for the purpose of ascertaining the wishes of Cornet Djemmal-Eddin Shamil, will communicate the reply to General Read.

"I hasten to forward this news for the information of yourself and Prince Orbeliani alone; and have the honour to add, that as soon as the answer of Cornet Djemmal-Eddin Shamil is received, it shall be instantly communicated to you.

"Accept the assurance, &c.

"Tiflis, Nov. 9, 1854."

In the meanwhile Oscar had returned from Dargi-Vedenno with very bad news. Shamil annoyed at Prince Chavchavadzey having declined to enter into any positive negotiations on the subject of his son's return, had threatened to stop the negotiations altogether; and to send the captives to the *aouls* as presents to his Naibs.

Prince Chavchavadzey had lost no time in writing again to General Read and Prince Bariatinsky. The following was his letter to General Read.

"From my first letter you perceived that, in return for the liberation of my family from captivity, the first thing Shamil demanded was the return of his son. Since that time, notwithstanding the numerous letters he has received from Prince Orbeliani and myself, in which we explain to him how impossible it is to comply with his request, our negotiations have not only taken a bad turn, but have reached such a point that I have lost nearly all hope of ever seeing my family again.

"My messenger to Dargi-Vedenno, one of my own servants, returned to-day with a letter from Shamil, in which he says that throughout our negotiations he can see nothing but a determination not to apply for the return of his son; and therefore, that henceforth there need be no further communications between us with reference to the liberation of the captives. He threatens, moreover, in conclusion, that unless a decided answer be sent to him forthwith, he will send them as slaves to his principal officers.

"The above is the cause of my addressing to your

excellency, once more, a humble request; what I beg is, not that you will intercede to have Shamil's son forced to return — a thing which I neither could nor ought to desire; but that you will procure a direct answer to Shamil's demand as quickly as possible. Even a decided refusal will give me a faint hope that Shamil may perhaps be induced to change his conditions; but in the absence of a direct reply, it will only remain for me to take farewell of my wife and children for ever.

"I remain with sincere respect, &c.

"Nov. 18, 1854."

The letter to Prince Bariatinsky was almost in the same terms.

"I need not tell you," concluded the writer, "how much I have been shocked by Shamil's threat. You will understand what I must feel at the thought of the future that is reserved for my poor family. But what is to be done? It seems to be the will of God; and all I can do is, to study how I can support with patience such a fearful trial. I have now no special request to make to your Highness; but leave my case entirely in your hands, in the full hope that sympathising with my sorrow, you will do all that is possible to extricate me from a calamity than which none greater can possibly be imagined.

"Nov. 18, 1854. Shoura."

These letters were sent off to Tiflis by a soldier belonging to Prince Bagration's regiment of Irregular

Mussulman Cavalry, and Prince Chavchavadzey had the satisfaction of hearing in reply that they had been transmitted to the Minister of War, who would afterwards communicate the contents to the Emperor. Prince Bariatinsky further informed him that in consequence of the new danger which threatened the captives, General Read gave him (Prince Chavchavadzey) permission to communicate to Shamil the decision of the Emperor with respect to Djemmal-Eddin's return. This decision had already been made known to Prince Chavchavadzey in Prince Bariatinsky's letter (marked "secret") of November 9th, and the latter now ended his communication by repeating that when the answer of Djemmal-Eddin himself was known it would be immediately forwarded by a special courier.

As soon as Prince Chavchavadzey received General Read's permission to communicate the Emperor's decision to Shamil, he lost no time in doing so; and on this occasion complied with a wish expressed by the Iman that messages should not be sent to him through common servants, but that persons in the Government service, who could be regarded as confidential agents, should be employed. In accordance with Shamil's desire, Isaac Gramoff, a Younker* in the Russian army, and Prince Gregory Orbeliani's ordinary interpreter, was despatched to Shamil on the 2d of December, while Prince Chavcha-

* To obtain a commission in the Russian army it is necessary either to have been educated at one of the cadet schools, or to serve for a certain time (in the case of a noble two years) as "Younker." A Younker is, in fact, an aspirant for a commission, serving in the ranks and occasionally acting as ensign.

vadzey was anxiously awaiting Djemmal-Eddin's reply, and doubting whether the educated Russian officer would consent to return to his barbarous native land.

Fortunately these doubts were soon dispelled by a most satisfactory answer from the young Djemmal-Eddin, which was communicated to General Read in the following letter from the Minister of War.

"Having just received your letter of November the 25th from the Feldjäger Staal, I hasten to inform you that Shamil's son has expressed his wish to return to his father without waiting for the men whom Shamil had proposed to send for the purpose of having an interview with him. Accordingly I have, by His Majesty's command, given directions for his recall from the kingdom of Poland, where the regiment in which he serves is at present stationed, and as soon as he arrives I shall instruct him to proceed to you. The delay which has occurred in obtaining his answer about returning to the Caucasus has arisen solely from the necessity of communicating with his superior officer, and from the great distance at which the regiment is stationed. Accept the assurance, &c.

"Dec. 4, 1854."

After receiving this joyful intelligence, Prince Chavchavadzey lost no time in communicating it to Shamil, and there was now a clear possibility of bringing the negotiations to a satisfactory conclusion.

CHAP. II.

THE energy and skill with which the Younker Isaac Gramoff conducted the negociations for the liberation of the Princesses entitle him to their everlasting gratitude. Prince Chavchavadzey could scarcely have met with a man better qualified to act as his confidential agent in so delicate and difficult a matter, and as Gramoff henceforth takes a prominent part in the events we are relating, it may be as well before proceeding further to say a few words about his history up to the period of his first expedition to Dargi-Vedenno.

Isaac Gramoff was born in the little town of Shoushi, and is an Armenian by religion* and by descent. He is a type of those natives of the provinces beyond the Caucasus, who, to the quick perceptions of the inhabitants of the South, and a readiness and self-dependence of character which is developed at an early age by the warlike scenes that perpetually surround them, have united habits of order and discipline acquired in the Russian service. Such men indeed form valuable officers, and are especially useful in communicating between the superior authorities and the local governors, or the chiefs of the disobedient tribes. Possessing to a nicety a know-

* The Armenians belong to the Western Church.

ledge not only of their languages, but also of all their manners and customs, they form the best possible intermediaries between the Government and the varied populations of the Caucasus and Trans-Caucasia; and when, in addition to this, they distinguish themselves by their loyalty, it is almost impossible to estimate their services too highly.

The exterior of men of this class at once points to the circumstances which have contributed to the formation of their mental and moral character. With a dignity of deportment which is quite Asiatic, they have at the same time a quick, penetrating glance, and a laconic style of conversation, in which every thought appears to have been at once and finally cast in the most appropriate form of words. These characteristics are evidently the result of their constant intercourse with the Eastern nations, to whom they also owe their usual costume; they have at the same time acquired a certain ease of manner from the Russians, and have gained habits of order, punctuality, and respect for their superiors in the Government service.

Of these Trans-Caucasians in the service of Russia, Isaac Gramoff is a worthy representative, and it will be understood from the special qualifications of such a man that whatever he has to say on the subject of Shamil and the mountaineers is entitled to particular attention. Being half a mountaineer himself, and speaking the Tartar language with fluency and correctness, he was able to understand all that took place around him, and, accordingly, his testimony possesses a value to which no previous accounts can lay claim.

To complete the portrait of Gramoff, we must add that he was thirty-two years of age, and that he had received his early education in the school of the German colony at Shoushi, where, besides German, he was taught Russian, which he speaks equally well with the Armenian and Tartar languages. He left the German school before he had completed his studies, but continued them in the Government service, which he entered as an interpreter, in the Department of the Governor of Shoushi. He was afterwards attached in the same capacity to Prince Gregory Orbeliani, and the personal regard he entertained for that officer caused him to offer his services directly he heard that the Prince was in search of a volunteer to proceed to Dargi-Vedenno.

But it is now time to follow him to Shamil.

Gramoff, as has been already said, started from the village of Andreiva on the 2nd of December, and was accompanied by Mohammed, who had already carried messages to Dargi-Vedenno. In addition to several letters to the captives, the emissaries took with them clothes and other things which the Princesses were likely to require.

They proceeded first of all to Bourtounai, an *aoul* belonging to the tribes of Salataou, with whom the Russians are at war. Here they found a letter from Shamil, which had been entrusted to the Naïb Mourtesa-Ali. The letter was as follows: —

"I have had a dream, in which I saw Prince Orbeliani's interpreter coming to me with good news from my son. My eyes are on his progress."

Gramoff was astonished to find how well Shamil was

served by his spies; and, accompanied by two native guides, proceeded through Salataou to Derhek-Otar, where the Iman pitched his camp while he was engaged in his expedition against Baron Nicolai.

On the fourth day of his journey, at ten in the morning, Gramoff arrived at the camp; but, before entering Shamil's presence, wrote to inquire how he was to present himself to him.

He was told, in reply, to appear in the Russian uniform.

In consequence of this, Gramoff set off at once to Shamil's tent, but was not allowed to enter until he had been disarmed. When he was admitted, he saw Shamil sitting immediately opposite him, with Daniel-Sultan on his right hand, and Ker-Effendi — a half-blind old man, who never leaves Shamil, even at night, when he is on a campaign — on his left. Next to Ker-Effendi was the veteran Djemmal-Eddin, with whom the reader is already acquainted. The persons by whom Shamil was now surrounded were his most intimate councillors, although it is reported that Daniel-Sultan only owes his position to his relationship, and that the Iman in reality puts but little confidence in him.

Several Naibs, among whom was Shamil's son Kazi-Machmat, were standing at a distance from the others.

Gramoff bowed, and without saying a word gave Shamil a letter from Prince Orbeliani. This letter contained a strong recommendation of Gramoff as a trustworthy person, and the writer ended by congratulating Shamil on the Emperor having granted his son permission to return.

Having taken the letter and made himself acquainted with its contents (through his own interpreter) Shamil invited Gramoff to take a seat, and inquired after the health of Prince Chavchavadzey and Prince Orbeliani.

"Thank heaven, they are quite well," replied Gramoff; "and they are much obliged to you for your attention to the captives. We are human like yourselves, and can appreciate kindness; and if not, at all events, God will reward you."

At these words Daniel-Sultan smiled as if he perceived a double meaning *; but Shamil appeared pleased. He ordered Gramoff's sword to be returned to him, and was very angry with the sentinels who had disarmed so agreeable a man. Then, turning to Gramoff, he added,—

"I am grateful for the confidence reposed in me. This is the first time a message has been sent to me by a Russian officer, and I consider myself fortunate in receiving him."

Gramoff replied to each compliment by another, knowing this to be a necessity in commencing conversation with a Mussulman.

"Will my son return to me?" asked Shamil, at last.

"Though your son has become half a Russian," replied Gramoff, "yet, if he inherits your large views he will

* Afterwards Daniel-Sultan, in a private conversation with Gramoff, expressed his regret for what the family of Prince Chavchavadzey had suffered. "I would rather have suffered anything," he said, "than have started on that expedition if I had known what was to be the fate of the captives. The incursion into Kahetia was commanded by Kazi Machmat (who never crossed the Alazan), Daniel-Sultan, and a Naib named Kair-Bek, who was soon afterwards killed.

certainly return; for it is better to command thousands here than hundreds in Russia."

Shamil turned to Daniel-Sultan with a smile, and said,—

"What do you think of him? I think he is indeed Prince Orbeliani's interpreter!"

Then taking a repeater from beneath his cloak, he made it strike, and finding it was half past twelve, continued, —

"However, it is now time for me to go to prayers."

The nearest moulla screamed out the call to prayer, and the audience was at an end.

Gramoff was taken to a separate room.

When prayers were over Ker-Effendi came to Gramoff, and, after an infinity of compliments, asked him how the siege of Sebastopol was going on. Gramoff answered that from the news which had reached him at Shoura, it appeared that the winter was making great havoc in the lines of the English and French.

The next day Shamil sent the first thing in the morning to inquire after Gramoff's health, and towards five o'clock the visitor was supplied with a large bowl of calmuck or brick tea*, containing about twelve glasses, which it was necessary to drink to the last drop in order to give no offence to the host.

The attendants, who were richly and elegantly dressed, brought Gramoff his breakfast, dinner, and supper,

* Tea-leaves made into a sort of *compôte* with sheep's blood, and afterwards cut into brick-like forms. This tea is consumed in large quantities by the Siberian tribes, and the bricks frequently take the place of money in commercial transactions.

to his room, but he spent his evenings with Shamil, and usually talked with him for some time alone. The conversation turned upon subjects of no great interest; Shamil indulged in pleasantry, or inquired about some well-known Russian general; but never spoke of the liberation of the captives. At last, when Gramoff had been three days with the Iman, the latter announced that he was going the next morning to Dargi-Vedenno, and would then settle about the exchange of the captives.

On the following day, Shamil rose between four and five, and in accordance with his expressed intention, started for Dargi-Vedenno. As he was setting off, the sound of artillery was heard. The firing was rapid and not far distant, and it appeared that his chief *corps* was engaged with the detachment under General Wrangel, by whom it is known to have been completely routed. Indeed, the sudden return of Shamil to Dargi-Vedenno, was a sign of the failure of the expedition, and was nothing more than a retreat in good time from the danger which threatened him. But the Iman did not evince the slightest annoyance or anxiety. He joked with Gramoff, who was riding by his side, and shortly afterwards, Hassan began to shout forth the sacred chant, *Lia-illiaha-il-Allah**, which was taken up by the whole

* Shamil is accompanied in all his expeditions by two hundred chosen Avarians, who are generally veterans. Their arms and equipments are excellent, and they carry their own particular flag. A hundred of them ride before and a hundred behind Shamil. Each party advances in five rows, and the chant from the Korân is sung perpetually first by the advanced guard then by the rear, and so on alternately. Daniel-Sultan always rides on Shamil's right, this being a special favour which is never granted to any one else.

of the Murids. They advanced in this manner for three versts, when the sound of artillery became louder, and the discharges more frequent. Shamil paused for a few moments, listened attentively, and then continued his journey with all his former composure. He concealed what was passing in his mind with great skill; at one time by means of pleasantry, at another simply by falsehood. Gramoff had the opportunity of seeing both these methods put into practice.

"Isai-Bek*," said Shamil, as if for the purpose of iverting his attention from the subject of which he was really thinking, "you see that horse, with a couple of bags swung across its back?"

Gramoff answered in the affirmative.

"That is the way to go out on a campaign," continued Shamil; "that is the whole of my baggage. It contains all I require on a march, and yet I am an Iman, and command a large body of troops. With you, every ensign carries more. That is why your columns are so long; and you will agree with me, that long, straggling columns are not very desirable on a march."

Gramoff answered only with a smile. Having gone on about another verst, Shamil's further progress was stopped by the arrival of a messenger, who with several other mountaineers came galloping towards him from the direction in which the sound of artillery was still heard, though the firing had now slackened considerably. The messenger gave Shamil a despatch from Eski-Naib, written on a small, dirty piece of paper. The Iman read it, congratulated those around him on the victory

* Isaac, with the addition of a complimentary term.

that had just been gained over the Russians, and taking off his *shashka*, said to the mountaineer who had brought the news,—

"Thank Eski-Naib, and give him this sabre in token of my great satisfaction."

Gramoff did not believe in the victory which the mountaineers pretended to have gained over the Russian detachment; but, while he continued to observe Shamil as closely as possible, he was unable to understand how a man could have such command over himself, as not in any way to give the slightest sign of discomposure.

But the deception could not last very long. After the messenger had returned to Eski-Naib, Gramoff remained some distance behind Shamil, and joined the rear of his body-guard. Here he found several mountaineers, who had come from the scene of action since the messenger. They were telling the Murids the real state of the case, and Gramoff ascertained that Eski-Naib's force had been completely routed by the Russians. Another proof that the mountaineers had been defeated was given immediately afterwards by Shamil himself, who halted his escort, and turning to Gramoff, said,—

"Now, Isai-Bek, you must go on to Vedenno, and I will return to my troops."

"Allow me to remain with you?" answered Gramoff.

"No; you have nothing to do with us. You will not fight your own men, and you will have no chance of attacking ours. No, I will not allow it. If the engagement should recommence; and you should be wounded, it would be upon my conscience; therefore you had better start for Vedenno, where you may expect me soon."

Shamil and his Murids now retraced their steps; and Gramoff set off with his conductors to Dargi-Vedenno, which was at about twenty versts distance. About four versts from the place he was met by a party of Murids who had remained in Vedenno, and now came out to receive him with honours. It was a remarkable fact that among these Murids there was not one young man. All the youth of the army had joined the expedition. Nevertheless the meeting did not pass without the usual firing and *djigitovki* *, by which the mountaineers express their joy when any happy event has taken place. The Murids were led by Hadjio, Shamil's steward, with whom the reader is already acquainted.

In the environs of Vedenno, Gramoff noticed nothing very striking; but of Vedenno itself, he preserved the following impression.

The *aoul* in which Shamil resides, like all the *aouls* of Chechni, is spread over a considerable space and, like the various *stanitzi*† of the Cossacks in the Caucasus, is surrounded by a moat and a palisade of branches. The buildings are all of wood; in which respect they differ from those of the Daghestan and Avaria, where the houses are built of stone upon rocky foundations. In the latter provinces, moreover, the houses are grouped together; whereas in Chechni a village which consists of only a hundred houses will be three or four versts long, owing to the fact that each house is surrounded by a garden or ploughed field.

In the middle of Vedenno Gramoff found a palisade

* The *djigitovki* are the *fantasias* of the mountain cavalry.

† The *stanitza* is the Cossack intrenched camp.

enclosing a space upwards of five hundred yards in length and nearly three hundred in breadth. This was the outer court of Shamil's seraglio. The inner court, that is to say the seraglio itself, is in the centre, and is the residence of Shamil's family, his servants and his visitors, among whom Kazi-Machmat, his second son, is classed. This son is the Naib of Karaty, with authority over the districts of seven inferior Naibs.

In the outer court Gramoff found accommodation for about two hundred of Shamil's escort of Murids, who form the flower of the army and are usually selected from the Avarian villages — at least half of the number being distinguished veterans in cavalry warfare. Here also was a small shed containing arms which were apparently too old for use. While living with the steward Hadjio, in whose house he spent several days, Gramoff obtained much information respecting the mountaineers. Thus, for instance, he learned that at Vedenno, besides the regular army, there were three hundred and forty foreigners, principally Poles, and about four hundred native civilians. Shamil's Murids not only act as his escort, but at the same time keep watch over him on their own account. They never leave him. Even to the Mosque, he is attended by this doubly-significant guard; and however much he might desire it he could never free himself from his faithful attendants. He visits the Mosque every Friday, and on these occasions the Murids form a double line from the seraglio to the steps of the sacred building, and sing the *Lia-illiah-il-Allah.* When he has entered the Mosque the Murids follow him, and remain in silence around him,

while he is saying his prayers, which, however, seldom last more than an hour.

As a curious proof of the awe with which Shamil inspires his people, Gramoff mentions that the inhabitants of Vedenno, in their ordinary conversation, swear and curse by his name and health. Unfortunately the interpreter made but a short stay at Shamil's head-quarters; otherwise, his observations respecting a place involved in so much mystery would doubtless have been far more complete, and therefore far more interesting.

But to return to the incidents of the story, Gramoff had only been one day in Hadjio's house, when Shamil and Daniel-Sultan returned from their expedition. Hadjio went to see them and came back with the information that Shamil would receive no strangers, and that he had already retired to his bed-room.

The following day, at about six in the morning, Shamil sent to inquire after Gramoff's health, and at ten requested to see him.

Gramoff went to the seraglio and visited the Iman in his private cabinet. Here a solemn conclave was assembled. Shamil was sitting at the end of the room. On his right was Daniel-Sultan, and on his left Ker-Effendi. The late Naib of Andi, Moortoul-Ali and Shamil's interpreter, Shah-Abbas (whom Gramoff discovered to be an Armenian by birth, though he had long since adopted the religion of his captors), also occupied places of honour; and the council was completed by twenty Murids, who sat along the wall in a row.

Gramoff bowed to all present, and took up his position standing, near the door.

"Are you well, Isai-Bek?" said Shamil with a pleasant smile.

"Thank heaven, and through your kindness, I am well," replied Gramoff, with respect.

"Sit down," said Shamil, pointing to a place on the carpet opposite himself.

Gramoff took his seat, folded his legs, and after a short silence, Shamil said with another smile, —

"Isai-Bek, what do you think of Daghestan?"

"In what respect, Iman?"

"What do you think of our roads, of your reception, and of such customs as you have been able to notice during your hasty journey?"

"Will you allow me to speak candidly, Iman?"

"Certainly. One should speak the truth before man as before God."

"If so, I must say that your roads are very bad, and very dirty. Travelling is also rendered very difficult in your country, by the numerous woods, rivers, and defiles. I advanced at the rate of about ten versts* a day, and really cannot say anything favourable of my journey. As for your hospitality, that is everything that could be desired."

"I am pleased to hear you speak as you do. Now you understand how the powerful Tsar, who will not submit to three kings, can do nothing with me, though he never ceases to send his armies against me. I

* Less than seven miles.

do not venture to compare myself to these powerful sovereigns. I am Shamil, a common Tartar, but my bad roads, my woods and my defiles, make me much stronger than a great many monarchs. I ought to anoint all my trees with oil, and to mix the mud of my roads with fragrant honey." Having terminated this long speech, Shamil turned round with a smile which was returned by all present. Then changing the expression of his face, he said to Gramoff, —

"Isai-Bek, great personages always begin their conversations with pleasantry, and afterwards come to important matters. We have been following this system with you. At present we will talk of business."

Gramoff understood that the Iman had probably wished merely to give him confidence, and that now all his amiable phrases had come to an end, and he was about to assume a severe tone. He therefore answered with increased respect, —

"Speak, and I will answer, Iman."

"Well, then, are Prince Chavchavadzey and Prince Orbeliani trifling with me or not?" said Shamil, in a voice and with an expression in which not the slightest trace of pleasantry was perceptible.

Gramoff remained silent, and all the mountaineers looked like personifications of attention. Shamil continued as follows: —

"At first I demanded five million roubles for the liberation of their families. Then I took pity on them, and asked one million, a hundred and fifty prisoners and my son Djemmal-Eddin. But until now they have done nothing but feed me with sweet letters. I am astonished

they can write so much, when it would be so much better to write less and do more. That Prince Orbeliani annoys me especially. I think I could kill him, if he fell into my hands. . . . But of course he would do the same with me; we are enemies."

As he said this, Shamil knitted his brows, and his eyes assumed an expression of great ferocity, instead of being half closed as they generally are.

After a short silence, Gramoff said persuasively, but at the same time with dignity,

"Iman, if you will allow me, I will answer you."

"Well, tell me what you are commissioned to say."

"It is the same thing to Prince Chavchavadzey and Prince Orbeliani whether you require five millions or only one. Such sums as you demand are only possessed by kings; but I can confirm their promise that you shall have forty thousand roubles silver; and how that amount was collected Heaven only knows."

Shamil listened attentively to Gramoff, but made no reply.

"There is Daniel-Sultan," pursued the emissary, "he knows what fortunes the Georgian princes possess. Ask him whether there is one of the number who, after selling the whole of his property, could realise a million."

Daniel-Sultan confirmed the truth of what Gramoff had been saying, and added, —

"I am only astonished that they were able to get forty thousand."

Here the Naibs began to talk among themselves. They expressed their distrust of Gramoff's words; and one of them at length spoke as follows: —

"Isai-Bek, what you say is not correct. How can it be difficult for you Russians to pay such a sum as one million? If our Iman required it he could have an *arba* full of silver."

"But what I offer to you would fill two *arbas*, and even two would not suffice to carry the sum along your bad roads," replied Gramoff, who had calculated that two of the Chechnian *arbas* would not hold more than thirty thousand silver roubles.

The Naibs with one voice expressed their doubts. Gramoff was quite certain that none of them understood what a million signified, and thought it best to attempt an explanation.

"You do not understand," he observed, "what we call a million; so, by way of giving you an example let me tell you that if you had a million beans, or grains of corn given you to count, and not only one but all of you were engaged in counting them,—then, if you were not allowed to eat until you had finished your task, you would all die of hunger."

The Naibs appeared much astonished. Gramoff's illustration had evidently produced its effect.

"Is it possible it can be so much?" they asked, with a look of ignorant innocence.

Here, however, Shah-Abbas joined in the conversation and nearly spoiled everything. Gramoff at once saw that this man could be very useful or very injurious, according to the part he took in the discussion. He accordingly resolved to ingratiate himself with Shamil's interpreter as speedily as possible; and, in fact, did so that very evening by presenting him with a watch, two

half-imperials, and a pound of tea.* But in the meantime, in order to give him no opportunity of interfering with the negotiations, he turned to Shamil and said:

"Iman, allow me to ask one favour of you."

"What is it?" replied Shamil, drily.

"Order everyone to be silent; otherwise I shall not be able to explain myself."

Shamil, addressing all present, commanded that Gramoff should be allowed to speak without interruption. Then turning to the emissary, he added, —

"They will now be silent, but what is to be done?"

"The persons I represent positively cannot give more than forty-thousand roubles. Your son will be at liberty to rejoin you, and you will have as many of your prisoners as can be collected. If your son does not come to you of his own accord, you can send confidential agents to him to persuade him to do so."

"My dear Isai-Bek, I do not care so much for my son as for the good of my people. I have not seen my son for sixteen years and have become accustomed to live without him. No, give me the million. Prince Chavchavadzey while defending the post entrusted to him was deprived of his family. The Emperor ought to give him a reward. Let him demand it."

"Iman, no one presumes to demand anything of our Emperor. With regard to your son, it was the Emperor himself who offered to let him return. Prince Chavchavadzey never could have expected such a favour.

* Gramoff found that almost all the persons attached to Shamil's person were eager for bribes. Accordingly he was lavish of his presents, which generally consisted of cloth, jewellery, or money.

As for the bravery and distinction of Prince Chavchavadzey, the Emperor has many such men among his subjects, and he cannot give each of them a million."

"Well, we will talk about it afterwards," said Shamil. "It is now time for me to go to prayers."

"Iman," replied Gramoff, "I should like to converse with you alone."

"Well, well; but at present we must separate, and God be with you!"

Gramoff went away and remained, until the evening, in his own apartment, where no one disturbed him. He was magnificently entertained, and even had salt given him with his meals; a mark of attention which, among the Chechnians, denotes especial respect.

In the evening he was visited by Shah-Abbas and several persons whom he had seen in the morning in Shamil's cabinet. Shah-Abbas conversed with Gramoff in Armenian, and, after accepting his presents, assured him of his earnest co-operation. From this time, too, Shamil's interpreter became very attentive to the Princesses, who attributed his conduct merely to the goodness of his heart, though it may now be accounted for in another manner.

The next day Gramoff saw nothing of Shamil; but, the day after he had another interview with him, when the Iman was surrounded by the same persons as before.

"Sit down, Isai-Bek," said Shamil to Gramoff.

"Allow me to stand," replied the latter, "my legs are tired from sitting."

"As you like," continued Shamil. "Are you quite well?"

"Thank Heaven I am well."

"God give you continued health! Now would you not like to make the Princesses happy?"

"That depends upon your kindness."

"Listen then to what I have to tell you. The Princesses live well with me, so that not even a bird sees them. I behave to them in accordance with the laws of the Shariat, and moreover I wish to receive a good ransom. Prince Orbeliani and Prince Chavchavadzey ought to think themselves fortunate, and yet they offer so little money. They seem to be laughing at me. And now they have commenced attacking me, I fancy they wish to reach Vedenno, and take as many prisoners as possible, in order to exchange them for the Princesses."

"Iman, I can say nothing about that in the presence of other persons, but I repeat my request to be allowed to talk with you alone."

"Very well, you shall do so afterwards," replied Shamil, evidently unwilling to dismiss those who were around him. Gramoff then returned to his own apartment.

The next day Gramoff had the secret interview with Shamil, for which he had been so anxious. It took place at rather a late hour, and it was evident that Shamil was himself anxious for a private explanation, though he was at the same time afraid of his principal officers, who were constantly watching him.

During the interview the following conversation took place.

"Even if the Princes possessed a million, they would not part with such an enormous sum," said Gramoff, with a confidential air.

"Why not?" asked Shamil thoughtfully.

"Because the Emperor would not allow them to increase your means of carrying on war to such a considerable extent. And, besides that, the Princes are very proud, and will not consent to bargain; but what they have once promised, they will be certain to give. Will you allow me to speak frankly?"

"Speak."

"In your place, then, I would be contented with the glory of the affair. Will it be a small thing to boast of, that you, as it were by force of arms, compelled the Russians to restore you that son whom you had previously given up to them as a hostage? The whole of Europe will hear of it, and it will be printed in all the newspapers that you have gained a triumph over the Russians."

"But it would be as well to receive the money also," said Shamil, with a smile.

"Believe me, Iman, I am not deceiving you in the least. Certainly, I am acting in the interest of Prince Orbeliani, because I am much indebted to him and love him sincerely, but at the same time I should like to render you a service by bringing this affair to a conclusion. I may have need of a similar favour from you some day, who knows? I may become your prisoner myself, and then you will remember my services, and have mercy upon me."

Shamil bent his head down and began to meditate. Then he sighed, and turning to Gramoff, said in an abrupt manner, –

"Very well, by to-morrow evening I shall try to have finished everything with the people. You know that without them I can do nothing; but after to-morrow I shall be able to send you away with a positive answer."

Gramoff went away, but about nine o'clock the next morning, he was again summoned to Shamil's presence, who on this occasion was surrounded by a number of his chief-councillors.

As Gramoff entered, Shamil turned hastily to him, and said: —

"Isai-Bek, I wish to congratulate you. Here sits my letter-writer, and I am preparing to send to Prince Orbeliani."

Gramoff looked round, and saw the writer, before whom lay a quarter of a sheet of common grey paper.

Shamil continued: —

"Money is grass. It withers and is gone. We do not serve money, but God."

At these words Gramoff saw the greatest attention depicted on every countenance.

"But I shall not write a great deal; it is only you who write so much. You can inform Prince Orbeliani yourself of all it is necessary for him to know, and I will write to him in a few lines. God is merciful, and my son will come back to me, and therefore I shall let the Princesses go."

Gramoff retired, but had soon to return, in order to

receive Prince Orbeliani's letter. He at the same time took charge of a letter from the captives to Prince Chavchavadzey, which Shamil had already caused to be read to him. Shamil told Gramoff to put both these letters into one envelope, and then to seal it in his presence. He desired him at the same time to go and meet Djemmal-Eddin, and said in conclusion: —

"See that my son is not surrounded by ill-intentioned persons, who may advise him not to return to me. Serve me in this matter, and let purity guide you in all your actions, and then you will be rewarded by me. Farewell."

These were Shamil's last words before Gramoff's departure.

The clever Armenian, as he bowed to the Iman, was not sparing in his oriental compliments, and the two diplomatists separated, mutually pleased.

About half an hour afterwards Gramoff attended by an escort rode out of Vedenno in the midst of much firing of guns, and on the 30th of December arrived safely in Temir-Han-Shoura. From Shoura he set off, in company with Prince Chavchavadzey, for Hassaf-Yourt, and thence to Vladi-Kavkas. After returning to Hassaf-Yourt he was engaged for three weeks in negotiations with Shamil's messengers, who were constantly arriving.

CHAP. III.

On arriving at Shoura Gramoff found Prince Chavchavadzey and Prince Orbeliani waiting for him. They were much comforted by the news that Shamil consented to the exchange of the Princesses on the terms proposed; and, as it was now decided that Djemmal-Eddin was to return forthwith to his father, there was no longer any difficulty about corresponding with them. Nevertheless, until after the 2nd of February nothing more was said about the liberation on either side. On that day, however, Prince Chavchavadzey received a letter from Baron Nicolai, informing him that Cornet Djemmal-Eddin had arrived at Stavropol, where, after awaiting the arrival of General Mouravieff, the new commander-in-chief and governor of the Caucasus, he had received orders to proceed to Vladi-Kavkas. This news was very acceptable, as Prince Chavchavadzey had hitherto only heard of Djemmal-Eddin's departure from St. Petersburgh on the 4th of January.

On the 4th of February Prince Chavchavadzey, accompanied by Gramoff, set off for Hassaff-Yourt, and arrived there on the following day. Here, immediately after his arrival, he received a letter from Vedenno. The writer was the Princess Anne, who informed her

husband that Shamil, having heard of his son's arrival at Vladi-Kavkas, requested that he might be sent as speedily as possible to Hassaff-Yourt, so that the affair might be brought to an end without further delay. The Prince heard, at the same time, that General Mouravieff had set off from Stavropol for the fort of Narchik, and that he would not arrive in Vladi-Kavkas before the 11th.

These circumstances induced the Prince to set off to Vladi-Kavkas, that he might have the honour of presenting himself to the Commander-in-chief, and, at the same time, request his permission to accompany Djemmal-Eddin to Hassaff-Yourt.

On the 9th of February the Prince started with Gramoff from Hassaff-Yourt, and on the 11th found the Commander-in-chief in the Stanitza of Ardon, where he was presented to him. Following the steps of the General, Prince David arrived the same day at Vladi-Kavkas, where he submitted to him the proposition respecting Djemmal-Eddin, who had hitherto been under the charge of Lieutenant-General Baron Wrangel, the commander of the left flank of the Caucasian line. General Mouravieff complied with the Prince's request, and on the 13th entrusted Djemmal-Eddin to his care.

On the 15th Prince Chavchavadzey, Djemmal-Eddin, and Gramoff took their departure for Hassaff-Yourt.

It is easy to imagine the joy of Prince Chavchavadzey when he found that he had at length at his disposal all that was necessary to secure the return of those he loved best. He was ignorant that fresh difficulties and fresh trials awaited him.

Sitting in the same carriage with the cause of his family's liberation, the Prince felt all the happiness of a man whose sufferings were drawing rapidly to a close; and with his mind now relieved of the burden which had so long oppressed it, he occupied himself entirely in studying his interesting companion. They had become thoroughly acquainted before they reached the end of their journey, and their intimacy continued at Hassaff-Yourt, where they lived for three weeks in the same room.

Djemmal-Eddin is only a year older than his brother Kazi-Machmat. He appears to be twenty-two or twenty-three years of age, is about the middle height, well-formed, slim, and graceful. His countenance expresses intelligence, benevolence, liveliness, and energy,—qualities which were, moreover, remarked in him by all who associated with him at Hassaff-Yourt. His features are very like those of Kazi-Machmat.

Djemmal-Eddin commenced and finished his education at one of the cadet *corps* (*Kadetsky Corpus*) of St. Petersburgh. He pursued his studies with much success, came out as an officer, and joined the escort of His Imperial Majesty. He was afterwards transferred to the Grand Duke Michael's regiment of Oulans.

In one of his conversations with Prince Chavchavadzey, Djemmal-Eddin said that he had always desired to serve on the staff, and that he had, in fact, been getting up his examination in order to enter the military academy with that view, when recent events caused him to abandon his intention. He had preserved his father's religion, but had forgotten the Tartar language, and

could only with great difficulty make out a few words. On the other hand, he understands Russian thoroughly, and has a sufficient acquaintance with French, which he reads with ease. He has a great desire to continue his studies, and seemed afraid that in the wildness of his native land he should forget what he had already acquired. In order to avoid this as much as possible, he had brought with from St. Petersburgh a large collection of books, atlases, paper, drawing materials, and paints. Prince Chavchavadzey declared that he had never seen a Mussulman who had so little of the Tartar about him, who was so thoroughly Europeanised, and had such Russian views, feelings and habits, as Djemmal-Eddin. But what the Prince admired above all was the manner in which the young man suppressed his real feelings (which could not have been otherwise than sad), and at the same time abstained throughout from appearing in the interesting character of a deliverer. Nevertheless his countenance betrayed at times his inward sorrow, and twice, but only twice, when alone with Prince Chavchavadzey, he spoke of what was weighing so heavily on his mind.

"I have got so accustomed to all that is Russian," he said to the Prince, "and so unaccustomed to all that is native, and I have moreover been so well treated in Russia, that I certainly would have remained there were it not for my duty as a son. What would have been said of me, if to the Emperor's permission to return I had replied by a refusal?"

On the second occasion, Djemmal-Eddin, after considerable hesitation, addressed the Prince as follows: —

"How strange is a man's fate! I was only six years old

when I was taken from the half savage *aoul* of Ahoulgo to receive a human understanding and education; and at the very moment when I am beginning to appreciate the advantages of study, and am ready with all my heart and soul to apply myself to it, fate throws me again into the midst of ignorance, where I shall probably forget all I have learned, and go backwards like a crab."

In all these remarks Djemmal-Eddin showed not only that he was a man of intelligence, but that he possessed a grateful heart, which he also proved on a subsequent occasion.

In the early part of March, after the negotiations for the liberation of the captives had been finally concluded, news arrived at Hassaff-Yourt of the death of the Emperor Nicolas. Djemmal-Eddin was deeply affected by the intelligence, and when all the officers at Hassaff-Yourt went to the great square to take the oath of allegiance to the present Emperor, Djemmal-Eddin accompanied them, and after the proclamation had been read, held up his hand of his own free will. This may have been merely the action of an impulsive young man; but on other occasions, and whenever he mentioned the subject, he always spoke in the most grateful manner of the kindness of his late Majesty.

On the 17th of February Prince Chavchavadzey, Djemmal-Eddin, and Gramoff reached Hassaff-Yourt; and on the following day the messenger, Mahomed, was sent to tell Shamil that his son had arrived, and to desire him to send some one to terminate the negotiations. Mahomed returned on the 20th February,

accompanied by Shamil's representatives, Hadjio the steward, and Younous;—the same Younous who at the siege of Ahoulgo, had given up to General Grabbe the hostage of six years of age. With the above came Hassan and the interpreter Shah-Abbas.

When the emissaries had been admitted to the presence of Prince Chavchavadzey and Djemmal-Eddin, Younous said to the Prince,—

"My sole object in coming here is to ascertain whether this young man is really the son of our great Iman. My commission does not extend beyond that."

Prince Chavchavadzey, having introduced the emissaries to Djemmal-Eddin, left them together to converse at their ease, Shah-Abbas remaining with them to interpret.

The emissaries at once noticed the resemblance between Djemmal-Eddin and Kazi-Machmat. They then began to question him as to what he recollected of his childhood before he was taken prisoner by the Russians. The young man was a little perplexed, but he spoke of certain things which he remembered as if from a dream; such as the position of Ahoulgo, his father riding on a white horse, and several other particulars which agreed with the truth. The emissaries were satisfied; but in order to be thoroughly convinced of Djemmal-Eddin's identity, they wished for some positive evidence, and, with the view of obtaining it, bared his arm, to look for some traces of a wound which he had received when very young in a fall from a mill. The scar was visible enough; and on perceiving it, Younous turned to Prince Chavchavadzey and said,—

"As you have delighted us by procuring the return of the son of our great Iman, so we can delight you by assuring you upon our honour that your family will very soon return to you."

This terminated the conversation, and the next morning Shamil's messenger set off to Vedenno with a promise to return in three days' time.

Considering the affair now settled, Prince Chavchavadzey and Baron Nicolai waited with a pleasurable excitement for the return of the messengers, who returned at the promised time — that is to say, on the 24th of February. But, to the Prince's great astonishment, they produced a letter from Shamil in the following words: —

"I am very much obliged to you for keeping your word respecting my son's return from Russia; but do not think that this will end the negotiations. You must remember that, besides my son, I require a million roubles and a hundred and fifty prisoners. These demands must be complied with, before I allow your family to return."*

This letter, with its totally unexpected contents, was to the Prince like a thunderbolt. The shock was almost as great as when he first heard the news of the descent upon Tsenondahl; but his presence of mind, which had never forsaken him since the beginning, did not desert him now. He remembered with whom he had to deal, and thinking it unnecessary to enter

* There was no letter from the captives. The Princesses had refused to write at the dictation of Shamil's officers (Part II. chapter viii.), and the Iman had accordingly taken the negotiations into his own hands.

into any details with Shamil's messengers, informed them, with an appearance of calmness, that the answer was contained in a letter which he at the same time entrusted to them.

The Prince's letter was as follows: —

"I am in the highest degree astonished at your last letter, as I did not think you were capable of withdrawing your word after it had been once given. Remember what you promised Prince Orbeliani and myself, through the interpreter Isaac Gramoff. Having considered the affair terminated, I cannot now sufficiently express my amazement at your fresh demands. For my part, I can only say one thing; I have always been in the habit of keeping my word, and I will keep it now. I informed you in the first instance what ransom I could give, namely, forty thousand roubles; and I cannot add a *copeik*. When, without any resources of my own, I decided on borrowing this enormous sum, I only did so because I could not venture to reckon on the Emperor's gracious permission to allow your son to return to his native land. If I had been aware that that permission would be granted, I should not have offered you half the amount. I await your answer."

This letter was the one which produced such unpleasant results at Dargi-Vedenno, and which caused the threats to send the Princesses into the *aouls*. On receiving it from Prince Chavchavadzey's hands, the messengers lost no time in conveying it to Shamil.

CHAP. IV.

On Monday the first of March, Shamil's emissaries returned from Vedenno, bringing with them letters from the Princesses.

"To-day," wrote the Princesses Orbeliani,* "they were going to distribute us among the Naibs. We thought we were lost; but Kazi-Machmat, and the Moullas, asked Shamil to send Hassan and Mohammed to you for the last time."

Prince Chavchavadzey's alarm and indignation at reading this were increased by the following communication from Shamil,—

"Your letter is far from satisfying my expectations, and I have therefore resolved to distribute your family among the different *aouls*. This would have been already done had it not been for my son, Kazi-Machmat, who has prevailed upon me to send to you once more to inquire whether you will make no addition to the sum originally offered."

On reading this letter, not sorrow, but anger, took possession of the Prince. It was plain that Shamil was now persisting in his demands, not for the sake of remaining firm to his first conditions, but simply with the view of getting something or other in addition to the

* Both the letters from the Princesses have been already given in full. - Part II. chapter viii.

forty thousand roubles. He also understood that if he made the slightest concession, he should only lower himself in the eyes of the mountaineers and encourage them to advance further claims. All this passed rapidly through the Prince's mind, and he determined to give vent to all the feelings of anger, hatred, and scorn which he had until now had sufficient prudence to repress. He turned to Shamil's agents and said,—

"I have no wish to write to your Iman any more, and I shall not do so; but you can tell him from me that long ago, on the banks of the Alazan, I took an eternal farewell of my family. I now trust them to the mercy of God. This is my determination, and these are my last words. If, on Saturday, you do not bring me the acceptance of my offer, I swear by the Creator, that on that day I leave Hassaff-Yourt and take Djemmal-Eddin with me. You may then follow me for twenty versts and beg me to return, but I shall take no notice of you, and you may do what you like with my family. Assure your Iman that I have always been grateful to him for his attentions to my family; but that if he permits himself to carry out his threat of sending them to the *aouls*, from the moment of their crossing the threshold of the room where they have hitherto been kept I renounce them."

The Prince uttered this renunciation not only from the warmth of his own personal indignation, but also by way of informing the mountaineers that they had nothing to gain by resorting to cruelty.

"I wish for their return now," he continued, "because I am aware that they have been honourably

treated; but if they are made the slaves of your Naibs, I shall no longer recognise my wife as my wife, my sister as my sister, nor my daughter as my daughter. I repeat again that I give you until Saturday. On Sunday you will find neither myself nor Djemmal-Eddin here. This is as true as that I am now standing before you; and if, after I have fulfilled my threat, Shamil should offer to give me my family back for nothing, together with all the treasures he possesses, I swear by God that I will not receive them."

With these words the Prince turned away, and wished to retire, but he was stopped by the Murids, who advised him to write to Shamil in a letter all that he had said to them in words.

"No," answered the Prince, "I shall not write. I am sorry that I have already wasted so much paper on a man who constantly breaks his word."

The agents then asked the Prince to give them two or three days longer to get a decided answer from Shamil. The Prince would not listen to them, and was again going to leave the room when they called him back, saying,

"There is another reason for delaying the affair," said one of them with considerable hesitation.

"What is it?" inquired the Prince.

"The Iman proposes that the Princess Chavchavadzey and her family should be liberated for the forty thousand roubles and his son Djemmal-Eddin; and that the Princess Orbeliani and her son should remain in captivity to be ransomed by Prince Gregory Orbeliani."

Irritated beyond bearing by what had occurred before, the Prince now lost all self-command, and might

have committed some dangerous piece of imprudence but for the presence of Baron Nicolai and Prince Bagration, who fortunately restrained him.

"Not only will I not leave my wife's sister," answered the Prince, "but I will not even allow the youngest of my servants' children to be detained."

Then Hassan turned to Djemmal-Eddin, who was present throughout the scene, and said to him, —

"Don't be disturbed. This is always the way with the mountaineers, but all will end well." When these words were translated to Djemmal-Eddin, he blushed with rage till the tears started from his eyes, and answered, —

"I have nothing to be disturbed about. You know well enough at what age I was taken at Ahoulgo; you yourselves gave me up to the Russians. I have forgotten every one and every thing in my native land, and I repeat that I have nothing to fear. I return to you without any particular joy, and probably I should return to Russia without any particular despair, if circumstances should only require it."

Prince Bagration took Djemmal-Eddin by the hand, and tried to check him in his imprudent speech.

"What are you saying!" he exclaimed, but his words had no influence on the impetuous young man.

"The devil take them! Am I to stand on ceremony with them?" he screamed, unable to contain his anger. But Baron Nicolai explained to him that his irritability might have a bad effect on Prince Chavchavadzey's affairs, and he was at once silent. This terminated the interview, and Shamil's messengers retired.

We need scarcely say with what trembling impatience the Prince and his companions awaited Saturday, and in what a state of anxiety they passed Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday: for in case of Shamil persisting in his demands, Prince Chavchavadzey had now only to fulfil his oath and to abandon his family to their terrible fate.

At last Saturday, the fifth of March, arrived. The Prince's excitement had now reached the highest pitch, when at eleven in the morning he was informed that Shamil's messengers were approaching. Three times he went to the door to meet them, but each time he returned, after reflecting that his eagerness could not but have a bad effect on people who have so much respect for calmness and solemnity of demeanour. At last the Prince leant against the mantelpiece, and resolved to wait for the emissaries without moving from his position. By his side stood Baron Nicolai, and in another part of the room were Djemmal-Eddin and Gramoff. The messengers entered, and were drily but politely invited to sit down. They bowed and took their seats without a word.

At last Hassan turned to Gramoff and said to him,—

"If the Prince will allow me, I will speak."

When Gramoff translated these words, Prince Chavchavadzey said, half audibly, to Baron Nicolai, that they augured no good; and that if the messengers had come with a favourable answer, they would not have commenced by such a gloomy silence and ended with such a strange phrase.

Then turning to Hassan, the Prince said, in a loud voice,—

"You remember our last conversation. If you have come to say that Shamil accepts all my conditions and has appointed the time and place of the exchange, then you may speak. Otherwise I beg of you to leave the room without saying a word."

As if in answer to these words, Hassan, and with him all the rest, got up; but having done so, they congratulated the Prince on the termination of the affair according to his own terms, and then communicated to him the following particulars. "When we returned to Vedenno," they commenced, "and gave your message to the Iman, Shamil assembled all the Naibs and old men, and showed them your last letter, while he at the same time made them acquainted with your final words.

"'If you will not accept Prince Chavchavadzey's last condition,' he said, 'then you must take his family, and keep them yourselves. I do not wish them to remain any longer with me.'

"Then the Naibs and the old men with one voice answered the Iman as follows,—

"'How is it possible to let your son remain in the hands of the Giaours? We agree to everything, only that your son may return to you. Send the captives back, and take your son and the forty thousand roubles.'"

Prince Chavchavadzey heard this result with delight; but still maintained his appearance of indifference, and quietly asked when and where the exchange was to take place.

"On that point Shamil said he would communicate with you by letter," answered the agents; after which they retired with a bow.

However, they did not leave Hassaff-Yourt, but remained there until the day of the exchange, to count the money, which, after much difficulty, had been nearly all obtained in silver, according to Shamil's request.* It had been determined to have the amount verified beforehand in order to avoid unnecessary delay after the prisoners had arrived; but it was no easy task for the mountaineers to count thirty-five thousand pieces of silver — the remaining five thousand having been forwarded to Hassaff-Yourt in gold. Hadjio, in spite of his high position, was engaged day and night like his companions, and he at length admitted that a million was a sum they would never have been able to count.

It was remarked that the mountaineers were exceedingly careful in counting the money, not, as they said, that they were afraid of the Russians cheating them, but that they were themselves afraid of defrauding the Russians. They arranged the roubles in tens, and afterwards examined each pile with the greatest attention. This care did not arise from honesty, but from a suspicion that the Russians might have given them intentionally more than the sum agreed upon, with the view of making it the cause of a dispute while the exchange was going on. What is still more extraordinary, is the fact that this strange suspicion proceeded from Shamil himself; and it may be accepted as an

* Shamil's agents at first wished to have the money in gold, and the Prince obtained gold pieces to the amount agreed upon. But afterwards Shamil thought the sum would look more imposing in silver, and Prince Chavchavadzey, after considerable trouble, obtained it in that metal.

evidence of the wily and subtle disposition of the chief enemy of our peace in the Caucasus.

The counting was brought to an end on Wednesday, the day before the one fixed for the exchange. The money was then placed in bags, which were sealed up by the agents and by Gramoff.

In the meanwhile the Prince and all his friends had been in the highest spirits, with the exception of Djemmal-Eddin, who, as the important day approached, became more and more thoughtful.

On Sunday the 6th, after a very pleasant dinner, the party were astonished by the information that a messenger from Shamil had arrived. Prince Chavchavadzey looked at Djemmal-Eddin, and exclaimed, with uneasiness,—

"Is it possible there can be any further change in the conditions?"

Djemmal-Eddin smiled bitterly, and answered,—

"Why should it not be so? They gave you their word on the Shariat, and perhaps at present they wish to act according to the Adat."

To explain this remark, it should be mentioned that the Caucasian mountaineers sometimes excuse themselves for breaking their promises by a pretended difference between the Shariat, which contains the sacred law, and the Adat, which is a book of customs. The Shariat contains the laws of the Koran, and the Adat the common local laws of the people. The former was introduced into the Caucasus with Mahometanism; but the latter is far more ancient. In all parts where the religious form of government exists, as in the domains

of Shamil, the Shariat is the principal source of law; but with the other tribes, as, for instance, in the west of the Caucasian range, the Adat is the supreme authority.

However, the messengers entered with a packet, containing a letter from the Princess Chavchavadzey, which, to the great joy of the Prince, merely informed him that Shamil wished matters to be brought to a conclusion as speedily as possible, and that the place proposed for the exchange was the old road on the banks of the Michik. The Prince accepted the place of rendezvous; but, in spite of his great anxiety, could not hasten the day, as nothing could be done before the money was counted, and this, as we have already seen, occupied the agents until Wednesday.

At last, on Wednesday, March 9th, Prince Chavchavadzey, Baron Nicolai, and Djemmal-Eddin, with the money and a detachment of soldiers from the garrison of Hassaff-Yourt, set off, and towards evening arrived at the fortress of Kourinsk. From Kourinsk to the old road, where the exchange was to take place, was only four versts; but it had been arranged that this distance should not be traversed until the next day, and in Kourinsk they remained for the night. About an hour after their arrival at the fortress, the Prince received another letter from his wife, dated from Maior-Toup, a mountain *aoul* on the other side of the Michik, and about ten versts from Kourinsk. The Princess informed him that she had arrived there in safety with her sister, the children, and all the other captives, and that she wished him to send her a watch for a Moulla who had on several occasions shown them great kindness.

It has been already stated that this watch was received and given to the Moulla of Andi, styled by the captives the "Benevolent."

Prince Chavchavadzey was at the height of his happiness and scarcely knew how to wait for the next day, when suddenly, at eleven at night, the arrival of fresh messengers from Shamil was announced. The Prince opened the letter conveyed to him under the painful impression that some fresh delay was proposed; and his uneasiness was increased by the Princess Orbeliani's short note, to the effect that Gramoff must come to them immediately, as Shamil wished to have a personal interview with him.

"Can there be any new demands or difficulties?" was the question with Prince Chavchavadzey and all his friends. None of them could imagine what Shamil wanted with Gramoff at such a late hour.

Nevertheless it was necessary to comply with his request as soon as possible. But, in the meanwhile, Gramoff himself had to be consulted as to his setting off in the middle of the night on a journey which would be attended with some danger. The Prince found him with Hadjio, the steward, who was examining the money for about the hundredth time, informed him of Shamil's wish, and asked him whether he objected to travel at night through the dangerous territory he would have to traverse.

Gramoff did not hesitate a moment. He drank a tumbler of punch, made the sign of the cross, and set off in company with Mohammed and the Murid who had brought the letter.

CHAP. V.

As they rode along, Gramoff endeavoured to find out from the Murid what Shamil really wanted; but he could gain no information from him, and could only imagine that one of the captives had been suddenly taken ill. It was only ten versts to Maior-Toup, but the night was so dark that the travellers frequently lost their road, and had much trouble in finding it again. They had also much trouble in fording the river Michik, and, finally, did not get to Maior-Toup before dawn. It was four o'clock when they arrived, and they at once directed their steps towards two huts, one of which was occupied by Shamil, the other by the captives. In the enclosure in front of the huts was a large fire, before which stood a crowd of Murids, who formed the Iman's guard for the night.

"Hai! hai! who's there?" shouted the sentinels.

"Isai Gramoff from Kourinsk," answered the interpreter, as he approached the fire to warm himself after his cold night's journey and to light his *papiros*.* Shamil recognised his voice, and instantly summoned him to his presence.

Gramoff entered the Iman's hut, and saw him half

* The Russian *cigarette*.

reclining among the pillows on the carpet, in front of a blazing fire. He was counting the amber beads of his rosary, and in this occupation passed the remainder of his sleepless night. By the side of Shamil slept the inseparable dreamy old man Ker-Effendi, and there was no one else in the room.

"How is your health, Iman? Is it possible that you are not yet asleep?"

"It is you have caused my sleeplessness. Why were you so long coming to my invitation?"

"The night was dark, and we lost our way. What has happened, Iman? Are the Princesses well?"

"God be thanked, they are all well; but I am angry with you. I began the affair with you, and with you I wish to finish it. You lived three weeks in Hassaff-Yourt, and did not come once to see me."

This reproach was intended only as a compliment, and was accompanied by a gracious smile and an invitation to take a seat near the fire. The attendants were at the same time summoned and ordered to bring in tea.

"Be quick!" exclaimed Shamil, "for *my* Isai-Bek has been nearly frozen on the road. However," he continued, turning to Gramoff himself, "that is not of much consequence, for you have performed a good action, and God will reward you."

When tea was brought in, Shamil continued:—

"I wanted to see you, in the first place, in order to thank you for the services you have rendered me. I know all. You went to meet my son, were constantly with him, and behaved very well. Secondly, to-morrow

is a great day for us. To-morrow we shall be at peace with the Russians; and there must be no foul play. I must also tell you, that, according to our custom, a father ought not to go out to meet his son; but I am doing so in order to accompany *my dear guests* and at the same time to prevent all chance of disorder during the exchange. As soon as it is quite light, I shall call all the Naïbs together, and inform them that not one of them is to step beyond the appointed boundary. When great persons are concerned, good faith cannot be too well observed. You can answer that all will be fair on the side of the Russians?"

"I will communicate your words to my superior officer, and you may rely upon it that all our proceedings will be conducted with a due regard to honour."

A short silence ensued; but Gramoff felt certain that Shamil would soon turn to the subject which most interested him, and so it happened. The father began talking of his son.

"What about my son? Is he quite well?"

"Thank God, he is well."

"I am told that he does not know a word of Tartar."

"That is true; but it is natural enough. He has lived so many years in Russia. You must not find fault with him on that account. When he has been with you some time, he will speak it again."

"Believe me, I shall let him live just as he likes. Only let him live with me."

Here another pause followed.

Shamil, with his eyes half closed, gazed upon the fire, and remained lost in apparently agreeable thoughts. Gramoff at length said to him,

"You do not intend to sleep then, Iman?"

"No; it interests me much more to talk with you. But perhaps you do not find it agreeable. Probably you are tired after your journey, and wish to sleep."

"No, Iman. I consider myself happy to have an opportunity of conversing with so exalted a person."

"I suppose Prince Chavchavadzey is expecting his family with impatience, especially now that we are so near one another."

"And I think your anxiety to see your son must be equally great."

"Yes, Isai-Bek, I confess that after his sixteen years' absence, I am very anxious indeed to see my son, so anxious that, as you see, I cannot sleep at night for thinking of him. Only let the affair be terminated without treachery."

"Your mind may be quite at rest on that point."

"I hope so. But I am angry with Prince Orbeliani, Why did he go away to Tiflis and leave all the trouble of the exchange to Prince Chavchavadzey? He would not have done that if his own children had been in captivity."

"You accuse him wrongfully. He left by command of his superior officer, and with us military duty takes precedence of every individual or family claim."

Shamil did not appear to understand how the duty of a soldier could be superior to all other duties, and the point gave rise to a conversation which lasted some time.

Shamil dismissed the subject of Prince Orbeliani, for whom he had evidently conceived a particular hatred, with the words:

"However, I have got rid of one, and with God's help, I will free myself from Argoutinsky's pupil."

He was alluding to Prince Argoutinsky Dolgorouky, who had been a very troublesome and dangerous neighbour to Shamil, as commander of the Russian army of Daghestan, and the district of the Caspian. After the death of Prince Dolgorouky, that important post was confided to Prince Orbeliani.*

"Isai-Bek, tell me now truly, upon your conscience, what is going on at Sebastopol?" said Shamil, soon afterwards.

"As before," said Gramoff. "They are firm on both sides, and the fighting goes on, the success being sometimes on the part of the besiegers, sometimes on that of the besieged. Nothing decisive has yet taken place." †

"It is a disgrace to them. In eight months three Tsars cannot take one fortress. After that I may be justly proud of holding out against the Russian armies. But to tell the truth, it is not I that keep them off so much as the mud and the woods of Chechni and the rocks of Daghestan."

Shamil's conversation with Gramoff lasted until six, and turned chiefly upon political subjects, especially those connected with the Caucasus.

Shamil gave his opinion of several of the Caucasian

* This general commanded a successful expedition into Daghestan in the beginning of the present summer.

† This was in March, 1855.

generals. He did not conceal his hatred of those who had on various occasions dealt him severe blows, but at the same time did full justice to their military abilities, which he criticised with the eye of an experienced commander. Thus, for instance, he spoke of Prince Argoutinsky Dolgorouky, Prince Gregory Orbeliani, Prince Bariatinsky, General Kastovsky, the late General Sleptsoff and Baron Nicolai. Unfortunately Gramoff, fatigued by his journey and by his sleepless night, is unable to remember the details of this part of the conversation.

Gramoff at last asked the talkative Iman to permit him to visit the Princesses.

"Go," said Shamil, "but if they are asleep, do not wake or disturb them." Gramoff set off to the hut of the Princesses, which was at about thirty paces' distance from that of Shamil. As he approached, he met one of the Georgian servants, who was going for water. Seeing Gramoff, she turned back and hurried to inform her mistress of his arrival.

On entering, Gramoff found the Princesses and the rest of the party already awake and dressed, but they were all sitting or lying on the floor, so that it was impossible to take a step in any part of the room. Gramoff covered the hands of the Princesses with kisses, and could not restrain his tears at the sight of the children, who had become wretchedly thin.*

"Make haste and prepare for your journey," he said to them; "Shamil and his men are waiting, and the sooner you see Christian land the better."

* Gramoff's interview with the Princesses has already been described Part II. chapter X.

"Good bye, Gramoff," said the Princesses, as he went away; "believe us, we shall never forget your services."

From the Princesses Gramoff went to Kazi-Machmat, and presented to him Djemmal-Eddin's compliments, for which he received the thanks of Shamil's heir. He then proceeded to Shamil, who met him with the question,—

"Have the Princesses already risen?"

"They are up and dressed," replied Gramoff.

"Then hurry off to Kourinsk, and I will follow you directly with them."

Afterwards pointing to the Naib, by his side, he continued,—

"This man will go with you, and will show you where the exchange is to take place. I hope that after it is over you will come back to me with Djemmal-Eddin, and I will then tell you something, and thank you for all your trouble."

"I am much obliged to you for your kindness. But I have forgotten to give you a message from Prince Chavchavadzey. Knowing that it is your custom to express your joy on all important occasions by firing, he begs that you will issue orders that nothing of the kind be done to-day; at all events, not until our people have passed the ridge on the other side of the road. This is necessary, in order to avoid all possibility of misunderstanding and disorder."

"Very well; but is there no chance of yours rejoicing and firing also?"

"No: we are in mourning for the death of our emperor, and shall not have any rejoicings for six months."

"Is your emperor dead?" exclaimed Shamil, evidently much struck by the intelligence. Then, after a few moments' reflection, he said,—

"Well, for such a great emperor, it would not be too much to wear mourning six years. However, a good father ought to leave a good son. Is his successor, Alexander, the one who was lately in the Caucasus?"

"The same," answered Gramoff. Shamil was again silent and thoughtful, but at last he said,—

"Now, my son, this is no time for talking. Set off to Kourinsk, and hurry your people. I hope to see you at the place of exchange, and when they have all arrived there, come to me again, and receive your instructions from me personally."

Gramoff bowed, and, accompanied by the Naibs and several Murids, set off for the fortress of Kourinsk. They galloped the whole way, Gramoff being anxious to reassure Prince Chavchavadzey and Baron Nicolai as soon as possible.

The Prince was waiting for them in the court-yard in front of his residence.

CHAP. VI.

In one of the April numbers of the "Rousky Invalid," of the year 1855, and afterwards in all the newspapers of the empire, appeared a complete account of the exchange of the families of Flugel-adjutant Colonel Prince Chavchavadzey, and Major-general Prince Orbeliani. Certainly the whole of Russia must have read with interest the detailed description, which, in addition to its copiousness, possessed the advantage of being an official document, so that it was known to be correct in every particular. But, on the other hand, it was necessary in the official account, to omit some details of a private and personal character,—such, for instance, as the impressions produced by the scene on those who took part in it; and these may with advantage be given here, not only for the sake of completing the official account, but also by way of showing in what a different light the same events may appear to different persons.

As regards the first point, the writer would have begun by pointing out the inaccuracies in the official account, if any had really existed; but as it is, he has only to adopt and then add to it.

With respect to the second, he will first of all call attention to a small German *brochure* * which appeared

* "Ein Besuch bei Schamyl. Brief eines Preussen."

in Berlin, and of which a Russian version was printed in the *Kavkas* newspaper under the title of an "Interview with Shamil." This narrative of the exchange possesses both interest and originality, and we accordingly recommend it to the reader's attention. It will be found to contain some details which are not included in the present chapter; but in spite of its general completeness we have still our task to perform, which consists in relating the particulars as they were communicated directly to us by the chief persons concerned.

It may happen that our description will be found less complete and less interesting than the one to which we have just referred, inasmuch as the latter was written by a person who was in a position to take a calm, observant view of what was going on; whereas our informants were too much affected by their own emotions to take much notice of the general scene. .

However, to begin with the arrival of Gramoff at Kourinsk, the Prince, as we have already said, was waiting to meet him in the court-yard. Both he and Baron Nicolai, who was with him, saw from Gramoff's eagerness and lively demeanour, that he was not coming from Maior-Toup with bad news. And they were soon assured that they were not mistaken; for Gramoff, getting off his horse, cried out,—

"They are all well, and everything is right. Get the soldiers out, and come to the place of exchange."

On hearing this, Prince Chavchavadzey, Baron Nicolai, Djemmal-Eddin, and a detachment of soldiers left the fortress. They had to march several versts up a hill, until at last they reached the place where

they were to halt. The Baron, the Prince, and Djemmal-Eddin advanced by themselves to the summit of the hill, and discovered that Shamil's party had already arrived. On the other side of the river Michik, on a spacious plain close to the wood, were scattered numerous groups of Shamil's mountaineers. Several persons were at work at the ford, where the prisoners would have to cross.

Gramoff was now sent off to Shamil to take his instructions as to the mode of conducting the exchange, while the Prince and his brother-in-law were occupied in stationing the soldiers and preparing them for any emergency that might arise. Thus, for instance, they received particular instructions to be careful no musket went off, and the infantry were ordered to be ready at a moment's notice to rush to the ford, cross the Michik*, at the point of the bayonet, and commence firing. The officers were determined nothing should occur which could give the mountaineers the slightest cause for suspicion, and also thought it necessary to take their precautions against any possible treachery. Fortunately these latter measures proved quite unnecessary, nor was confidence endangered on either side by a single chance shot.

In the meanwhile Gramoff approached Shamil and found him sitting on the grass beneath a large black Nankeen parasol which was held above his head by one of his Murids. Sometimes he went upon his knees in order to get a better view through his telescope which

* The banks of this river were the scene of a desperate battle between the Russians and the mountaineers in July (1857).

was resting on a three-legged stool and pointed in the direction of the Russians. On the right of Shamil sat Daniel-Sultan; and behind them, in perfect silence, stood the cavalry to the number of five thousand. By the side of the cavalry were the *arbas*, in which sat the captives beneath their veils.

Gramoff dismounted when he was within a few paces of Shamil, and his horse was instantly taken from him by the Iman's attendants.

Gramoff approached with a salute, and said,—

"Iman, what further orders am I to receive from your highness?"

"Take with you, and lead to about a quarter of a mile on the other side of the Michik, thirty-five men from my army, the captives, and my sons Kazi-Machmat and Machmat-Shabi; and from your side let some one come to meet them with my son Djemmal-Eddin, the money, and thirty-five soldiers."

"You have no further orders?"

"No; but do not forget, when all is terminated, to come back to me."

Gramoff set off with the *arbas*, sixteen Georgian men*, and thirty-five chosen Murids, with Kazi-Machmat at their head. Having reached the appointed place, Kazi-Machmat and the Murids stopped with the *arbas* while Gramoff galloped off to the Russian detachment, from which Prince Chavchavadzey, Baron Nicolai, and Djemmal-Eddin now advanced with thirty-five carbineers, two carts containing the money, and sixteen Lesghian prisoners.

* Sent to be exchanged against a similar number of Lesghians.

As the Prince gradually approached he perceived the *arba* in which his family were seated, and heard the voices of his daughters, who exclaimed —

"Look, mamma! there is papa on a white horse."

In the meanwhile Kazi-Machmat and his Murids had advanced and concealed the *arbas* from the Prince's view; and at the same time one of the party — it was the benevolent Moulla — took little Alexander in his arms and carried him to his father. In a few seconds the rest of the children were brought to him.

The Prince dismounted, pressed his children to his breast, and was proceeding towards the *arbas*, when he found himself face to face with Kazi-Machmat. Joy, anger, and revenge were now agitating his heart, but he endeavoured not to betray his feelings by any outward manifestation. Kazi-Machmat, pale and confused, like all his companions, addressed the Prince as follows through his interpreter.

"The Iman gave me orders, Prince, to inform you that he took as much care of your family as if it had been his own; and that if the captives suffered any discomfort with us it did not arise from any intention on our part to annoy them, but from our ignorance how to behave towards such women and from our want of means."

The Prince answered —

"Of the Iman's constant attention to my family, I have long been made aware by the letters of my wife and her sister; and in writing to him I have more than once had occasion to express my gratitude for it. I now request you to present to him yourself my sincere thanks."

"Through Isai-Bek," continued Kazi-Machmat, "you requested the Iman to prevent any firing on the part of our army in honour of my brother's return. The Iman promises that your request shall be attended to; but he also begs that you will take the same precaution, so as not to frighten the Princesses and their children."

The Prince now approached the captives, but could not distinguish them, as their faces were concealed by the veils. Neither the Prince nor the captives uttered a word, but remained as if spell-bound.

In the meanwhile Djemmal-Eddin was embracing his brother, and taking farewell of the Russian officers. Baron Nicolai presented him with his own sabre, and said, with a smile, —

"Don't cut at any of our people with it."

"Neither yours nor ours," answered the young man as he accepted it, nearly overcome by emotion.

Then Djemmal-Eddin, Kazi-Machmat, the Murids, the exchanged Lesghians, the *arbas* with the money, Gramoff, two Russian officers, and two Younkers, directed their steps towards the Michik, and were soon afterwards lost sight of in the crowd of mountaineers; while Prince Chavchavadzey, Baron Nicolai, and the liberated captives remained at the place of exchange. The Princesses threw off their veils, and at that solemn moment neither they nor the Prince could find words to express their feelings. A kind of stupor had been produced, and they now stood in presence of one another as if they had parted only the day before, instead of having been separated by a terrible captivity of eight months' duration.

After the most ordinary salutations had been exchanged, the Prince gave one arm to his wife and the other to the Princess Orbeliani, and led them to the carriages. On the road, and even after their arrival in Kourinsk, the same species of stupor continued on each side for some time; that is to say, until after they had all joined in thanksgivings, when the Prince and his family were left by themselves, and could give expression, unobserved, to all their rapture. We do not pretend to describe this scene. We may, however, mention one or two points connected with the Princesses' restoration to happiness.

At the termination of the thanksgiving service in the church of the fortress the captives received the holy bread*, and were deeply affected, so long had they been precluded from taking any part in the ceremonies of their religion.

At dinner the Princesses absolutely cried when they observed with what foresight all their wants were anticipated by the Prince, and the others who were present, —so little had they been accustomed of late to attention of any kind.

The *papirosses* which were lighted after dinner, threw them into ecstacies, so new and so delightful did each, even the most trifling, habit of their former life appear to them.

* The small loaves, from which the priest cuts the symbolic triangular notches of bread used in the sacrament, are afterwards distributed in the church.

EPILOGUE.

We cannot bring our story to a conclusion without giving some account of the last journey of the devoted Gramoff to Shamil, and adding a few more details respecting the first moments which followed the captives' liberation; besides which something remains to be said about the secondary characters of the drama.

These particulars we must group together in the form of an epilogue.

After crossing the Michik, Djemmal-Eddin, Gramoff, and the rest of the party were surrounded by a crowd of curious but respectful mountaineers, who were eager to behold the eldest son of their Iman. Several of them kissed his hands.

About twenty paces from where Shamil was standing, Djemmal-Eddin was met by the steward Hadjio, who held in his hand a bundle containing a mountaineer's costume, and said "that the Iman did not wish to see his son in any but his native dress."

When Gramoff interpreted this to Djemmal-Eddin, the young man could not refrain from exclaiming,—

"What a strange thing to require! How am I to change my dress here? I can be seen from the other side, where the ladies are."

"It is nothing," said Gramoff. "We will go over there under the tree; and you can undress yourself without observation."

There was no alternative. Gramoff and the others

rode to the trees, and formed a circle around Djemmal-Eddin, who a quarter of an hour afterwards appeared at their side in a beautiful mountaineer's costume, with arms to match. The latter were either mounted in silver, or richly gilt; and a horse with equally magnificent caparisons was waiting close by. Djemmal-Eddin sprang upon the horse, and proceeded slowly towards his father, accompanied by his conductors. When they were at about ten paces from Shamil, they all dismounted. Djemmal-Eddin approached, bowed, and was received into the embrace of his father, who remained sitting.

Shamil held his son some time in his arms, and was evidently much affected, for the tears flowed in streams down his face and beard.

After the first few moments of joy, the Iman turned to those around him, and said with much feeling,—

"I thank God for preserving my son, the Emperor for permitting his return, and the Princes for having solicited him to do so. And I thank you, Isai Gramoff," he added, "for your good services."

Then noticing the officers and Younkers by Gramoff's side, he inquired who they were.

Gramoff, in his excitement, had scarcely observed their presence; but he now informed Shamil that they were Baron Nicolai's *aides-de-camp*, who had accompanied Djemmal-Eddin in order to present him with becoming respect to his Iman.

"I thank them," replied Shamil. "I thought differently of the Russians; but at present I have my own opinion of them."

The officers asked Djemmal-Eddin if they might take farewell of him in the Russian style.

"Why not?" answered Djemmal-Eddin as he embraced them.

At this scene Shamil again shed tears; and—perhaps with a view to remove the bad impression which might be produced upon his subjects by this intimacy of his son with the Giaours—remarked, as he turned towards those who surrounded him,—

"They were my son's dearest friends."

He then rose and took a friendly farewell of the officers, while Kazi-Machmat ordered a hundred Murids to conduct the Russians back to their detachment. Shamil, however, retained Gramoff by his side, and said to him,—

"My dear Isai-Bek, I value your services most highly. My children and all my family will ever remember them. If you, or any of your relatives should fall into our hands, know that you will instantly be free. I say this in the presence of my chief Naibs. At present I have nothing with me to offer you in remembrance of me; but I will send you something, which I hope you will accept."

Soon afterwards Shamil fulfilled this promise by sending Gramoff a watch set in diamonds, and a magnificent chain, the whole present being worth about 600 roubles (100*l.* sterling).

Gramoff bowed and was about to take his departure. Djemmal-Eddin then embraced him and desired him to remember him to all his friends at Kourinsk, and to thank them for their kind hospitality. He also commissioned him to express his regret to Prince Gregory Orbeliani, that he had not had the pleasure of making his acquaintance.

Gramoff, accompanied by several of the oldest Murids

went towards the Russian detachment, which they came up with at about half a verst from Kourinsk. He congratulated the Prince and Princesses on their happy reunion, and received the expression of their gratitude for his sincere and earnest exertions, not only on the part of themselves, but also on behalf of their children, their grandchildren, and all their descendants. Gramoff could only answer that he had merely performed his duty as a Christian.

Afterwards Gramoff received a formal letter of thanks from the Princes, containing their testimony to the valuable services he had performed. This document was as follows: —

"In the year 1855, on the second day of April, we the undersigned, Lieutenant-General Prince Gregory Demetrieff*, the son of Orbeliani, and Colonel Prince David Alexandroff †, the son of Chavchavadzey, give the present document to the Younker Isai Gramoff of the town of Shoushi, in token of memorable services rendered by him to us.

"The above services were as follows: —

"In the month of July 1854, during the incursion of the mountaineers into Kahetia, under the command of Shamil, the widow of the brother of the first of the undersigned, that is to say, of the late Major-General Prince Eli Orbeliani, with her son George and her niece the Princess Nina Baratoff; and the wife of the second of the undersigned, with four little children, were made prisoners.

"During the captivity of these our families, we found it necessary to send to the mountaineers a confidential

* Son of Demetrius. † Son of Alexander.

agent, to explain to them the utter impossibility of complying with their demands for the liberation of our captive relatives, and to induce them to alter their conditions.

"Isai Gramoff, who was at that time attached to the first of the undersigned in the capacity of interpreter, volunteered to undertake the above mission, set off alone through a hostile territory, arrived in Dargo, had several explanations with Shamil and other mountaineers of importance on the subject of our affair, and persisted with so much firmness in contradicting their errors that at last he brought them to accept the terms which before his visit they had obstinately rejected.

"Thus Gramoff's journey to the mountains was one of the chief causes of the successful termination of the negotiations for the liberation of the captives, after which he again set off, and returned with them to our boundaries.

"During these journeys through the enemy's country, Gramoff of his own free will risked his life among the mountaineers, who are notorious for their treachery, and their readiness to rob and murder whenever they can do so with impunity.

"Such services are beyond reward, and we present this document to our esteemed Isai Gramoff as a token that his great devotion and self-sacrifice will never be forgotten by us, and that not only ourselves but also our descendants will always be grateful for them.

(Signed) "Lieutenant-General Prince Orbeliani,
"Colonel Prince David Chavchavadzey,
"Flugel-Adjutant to his Imperial Majesty."

This document, together with the sincere friendship of all the Chavchavadzey family, are valued by Gramoff

far more than all the objects presented to him as marks of their gratitude for his services. Before returning to Temir-Han-Shoura, where he is now occupied by the duties of the service, he accompanied the Princesses to Tiflis, and had the honour of being presented to the Governor-General.

As for the captives themselves, their first impulse was to turn to Heaven with gratitude, prayer and thanksgivings. At Tiflis as at Kourinsk, the first place they stopped at was the door of the church; indeed to visit the local relics, the Hill of St. David, and other holy places inside and outside the town, seemed for some time to be the only object of their journey. Their next wish was to present their thanks to the chief earthly cause of their deliverance. But he had already ceased to be of this world, and accordingly they expressed their gratitude to his august successor, the present Emperor Alexander Nicolaievitch.

The following were the letters addressed to his Majesty by Prince Chavchavadzey and the Princess Orbeliani:—

PRINCE CHAVCHAVADZEY TO HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY ALEXANDER NICOLAIEVITCH.

"Most Gracious Sovereign, "March 10, 1855.

"To-day, through the kindness of the Emperor Nicolai Paulovitch, now sleeping in God, my family has returned to me after eight months' grievous captivity.

"It did not please Heaven to give me the happiness of expressing my deep and sincere gratitude to my late benefactor; but, Sire, it will not cease to exist either in me or in my children. Myself, my wife, and all my family will pray to God to give me and my sons

strength to serve your Majesty, in return for the kindness and beneficence of your truly-faithful parent."

PRINCESS ORBELIANI TO HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY.

"August Monarch,

"My son and myself are liberated, are saved. In these words, Sire, are contained all the feelings of a mother who during eight months' insupportable captivity trembled every moment for the life of her only son. These words can alone express to you, Gracious Monarch, how fervent must be my thanksgivings to the Most High, and how sincere and profound must be my gratitude to our common father, now sleeping in God, the Emperor Nicolai Paulovitch. If the premature death of my husband has prevented him from serving your throne in return for the numerous favours which were showered upon him, and which since his death have been extended to me in the most bitter moments of my life, then, Sire, to his son is reserved that enviable fate, and it will be my most sacred duty to pray for strength to make my infant the worthy servant of your Imperial Majesty.

"March 12, 1855."

After the necessary delay, the Princess Orbeliani had the honour of receiving, through the Minister of War, the following rescript from his Imperial Majesty: —

"Princess Varvara Elinichna,

"Your expressions of gratitude to my ever-memorable * parent have deeply affected me. The libe-

* *Nezabvenny*, an epithet always applied to Nicolas since his death, as Alexander was called *Blagoslavenny* (the blessed).

ration from captivity of yourself and family was the object of his earnest wishes; but it did not please God to fulfil them until after his death. Consoled by the thought that the measures indicated by him had the desired result, it gives me great pleasure to assure you of the sincere joy with which I heard of your return from the mountains. In the hope that the Most High will reward you for all the difficult trials you have suffered, by developing in your son those lofty qualities which distinguish the noblemen of Georgia, I remain for ever, your well-disposed,

"ALEXANDER."

It would be difficult to describe the joy which was caused throughout Georgia, and especially in Tiflis, by the news of the Princesses' liberation, and their return to the capital of their native land. The excitement can only be compared to that which had been produced eight months before by the news of their captivity.

The delight of the inhabitants at the deliverance of the Princesses was increased by their appreciation of the kindness with which the Imperial hand had been extended to two of the families of orthodox and faithful Georgia.* As an illustration of this feeling, and also of the general

* The Church and State of Georgia were united with those of Russia in 1801. "When the Church of Georgia, now only a short time back, became an integral portion of the Russian Church and Empire, after having stood alone, cut off and isolated from all other churches ever since the fourth century, there was not found to have arisen in the course of fifteen hundred years any the slightest difference between them in doctrine, no, nor even in ceremonies; but they agreed in all points with us and with the other Œcumenical Thrones of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, and with the Churches dependent upon the first of these in Moldavia, Wallachia, Servia, Montenegria, Transylvania, Illyria, and, in a word, through all Sclavonia."—*Mouravieff's History of the Russian Church.*

sympathy felt in the fate of the Princesses, we cannot do better than publish a letter which fell accidentally into our hands, written by a young Georgian to his friends in the country, on the subject of the Princesses' arrival in Tiflis.

"On the 23rd April, the *fête* of the Victory-bearing George, saint and martyr, there are usually large numbers of devout persons in the church of Saint George of Kashvet; but this year more were congregated there than ever, and the result was a scene of an extraordinary and affecting nature. Before the commencement of the service entered Shamil's captives, who had just been liberated, through the kindness of the late Emperor, from the cruel hands of the savage enemy of Russia; the widow of the late General Prince Eli Orbeliani, and the wife of the Flugel-Adjutant Colonel Prince Chavchavadzey. The former entered the church with a baby in her arms, a beautiful and interesting infant, just what you may imagine a child of the purest descent. With the Princesses were the women who had shared their captivity, their privations, and their sufferings, and who had remained faithful to them throughout.

"I saw them all, and was a witness of the touching scene which followed. The liberated captives had scarcely entered the church, when they were surrounded by all the congregation. The peasants kissed their hands and fell at their feet, while others could not restrain their tears.

"In the midst of this emotion I could not help being affected by it, and I then tried to give myself an account of the ideas it called forth. Such, I reflected, is the effect of a scene which not more than half a century ago was of common occurrence with our fathers.

"Our illustrious commander and king, Eracli, inflicted severe chastisements on the Lesghians, but could not oppose them on all occasions with equal success, though he always found time to bring back to their native land those who were unfortunate enough to fall into their hands. And at present? . . . . At present Russia, with her great monarchs, and her powerful armies, generously protects us from our hostile neighbours. At present, instances of successful invasion and plunder are seldom heard of; and if they do sometimes happen, then that all-powerful help and co-operation is afforded which lately procured the liberation of the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the last Georgian king.

"We may be told that with such protection there ought to be an end to those disasters which at one time were constantly occurring in Georgia. We can only reply to this that the protection of Russia is a great and unexampled benefit, and that great things cannot be thoroughly accomplished all at once. And may not the successful attack upon Kahetia be looked upon as an instructive lesson, — reminding us of the former sufferings of Georgia, and of the guardianship to which it is indebted for the security it at present enjoys?

"For all these benefits let us thank Heaven! and let us be grateful to Russia! And may these feelings be sanctified by the Patron-Saint of Georgia, the Victory-bearing George, whose *fête* we celebrate to-day, to the glory and success of the Russian arms."

The liberated families remained more than a month in Tiflis, in the full enjoyment of domestic repose, after their eight months' constant suffering. At the same time

they had to prepare for their journey to St. Petersburgh and Moscow, where fresh duties summoned them. They were hurrying to St. Petersburgh in order to assure the Emperor personally of their unbounded gratitude, and to Moscow in order to comfort and soothe their mother Anastasia, Princess of Georgia, after all the grief she had suffered.

Both the families left Tiflis for a considerable time on the 15th of June. The prisoners from the village of Tsen-ondahl have long since returned to their homes and to their occupations; but the *château* remains a black and dismal ruin, a sad memento of one of the most terrible episodes of the Caucasian war.

The centenagenarian Marina Gamdeli, who had resided in it since its erection, did not long survive its destruction.

The Princess Tinia Orbeliani and Captain Achverdoff, who were so miraculously saved, all the children with the exception of Lydia, and all the servants except the devoted Nina, who, in spite of every exertion to save her, was detained in the *aoul* of Dido, are alive and well.

Madame Drancey, who set off with Prince Chavchavadzey's family to Moscow and St. Petersburgh, has no wish to return to the Caucasus, but intends going to Paris, where she will write and publish to the world recollections of her captivity with Shamil, under the title of *Huit Mois de Captivité dans la Schamylie* (!).

Probably that work will meet with great success in Europe; but, to our great regret, it is still more probable that it will circulate fresh errors respecting Russia in general, and the Caucasus in particular.

The most interesting observations about the Caucasus

that can be imagined, would be those of Djemmal-Eddin, if from want of occupation he should think of writing them down and would narrate with perfect sincerity the changes which mark the transformation of a European into a Caucasian mountaineer — a fate which, alas, inevitably awaits him.

From recent information, it appears that he has already accomplished a journey round and through the territory over which his father reigns. On his return to Dargi-Vedenno, he married the daughter of the celebrated Naib Talgik, and he has since taken upon himself (with the assistance and guidance of the Moullas) the superintendence of the administration and of judicial proceedings. In military affairs he never interferes. He is allowed to write occasionally to his friends in Russia, upon the condition that his letters are not long. From some of these letters we have ascertained that the mountaineers continually assure him he was very fortunate to get away from Russia. Djemmal-Eddin does not believe this; but he remains silent, and remembers the Russian proverb, "If you live with wolves, you must howl with them." Kazi-Machmat watches the occupations of his brother with a childlike interest, and has an evident respect for his education and European habits, which are said to form the object of his secret imitation. May it be attended with success!

THE END.

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